UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE WORKS OF EDWIN PUGH (1874-1930)

A CHAPTER IN THE NOVEL OF HUMBLE LONDON LIFE

THEOPHILUS ERNEST MARTIN BOLL

A DISSERTATION

IN ENGLISH

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA

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PREFACE

This monograph upon the work of Edwin Pugh (1874-1930) is intended to add something to our appreciation of an excellent artist in the rich field of London fiction. Pugh well deserves recognition among the many writers who have followed Dickens in taking their inspiration from the joys and sufferings of Cockney life. This generation has added a goodly group to their numbers; notably, Adcock, Morrison, Ridge, W. W. Jacobs, Pain, Onions, Newte, Vachell, Aumonier, Lyons, Burke, Priestley, Mann, Norah James, Norah Hoult, Mackail, and, yielding the palm to none of these, Edwin Pugh.

This monograph has been limited to those essentials of Pugh's work that would touch most directly upon the heart of the man and would most comprehensively describe his methods. The chapter I should most wish the busy reader to scan as an introduction to the mind of Pugh is that which attempts to gather into a system the thoughts Pugh expressed upon the living of life. I regret that the wishes of those concerned dissuaded me from adding a biographical sketch.

I owe not only the suggestion for this study but my enthusiasm for the whole field of English fiction to one who has been the inspiration of an incalculable number of grateful students at Pennsylvania, Professor Cornelius Weygandt. I owe a mammoth debt to him as chastener and encourager in person, and as he appears in his *A Century of the English Novel.* To my brother Arnold I owe a life-time's debt, from his help in giving me my first lessons in reading to his caring for the transfiguration of hieroglyphics into manuscript. But for my parents' interest in my studies and for their sacrifices time without end, I should never have been able to carry on my work. And my wife loaned her alert eyes in helping to prepare the manuscript for publication.

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THE CREDO OF REALISM

1

That Pugh was to become a searching realist with a bent for the morbid and tragic was not apparent from his first book, *A Street in Suburbia* (1895), sketches that promised a sentimental rather than a critical reflection of lower London life, and an objective rather than an introspective egocentric method. But, for some inner cause that was the beginning of self-realization, the first novel, *The Man of Straw* (1897), turned out to be a revolting portrayal of a monster of selfishness, whose days would have ended in delirium tremens if they had not been shortened by a justified murder. *Tony Drum* (1898) resumes the original sentimental mood, heightened by fantasy. *King Circumstance* (1898) is a medley of romantic fancy, crude realism, and a pathos that comes of a literary rather than a living inspiration. *Mother-Sister* (1900) again takes up the unpleasantly realistic thread, but it is brightened by the central character, the sixteen year old little motner. The happy ending, however, is artificial.

The Heritage (1901) begins another series of three novels whose view gives upon somber aspects of life and whose method requires an almost scientific accuracy of truth. There is no rosing over of any phase in the study of the second and third generations descended from an alcoholic maniac. *The Stumbling Block* (1903) tells the harsh story of a jealous woman who allows her coquetting rival to drown.

The first direct phrasing of the aim to disregard conventional touchiness and of the promise of a story that shall be true, however painful, occurs in *The Fruit of the Vine* (1904), when the drink-demoralized author, Gideon Bolsover, interrupts his rhapsodical confessions, that are to be material for a novel, to declare to his amanuensis: "This book of ours is to be no pretty art fakement; but just a slab of God's good truth." But the early portions of the book, that deal with Bolsover's childhood, contain scenes of honest sentiment, brilliantly told in lyrical mood.

Those parts of *The Spoilers* (1906) that tell of the corporal and

personal plunder of the thief, Chick Marketer, are written sincerely and truthfully; their brutal power is undiminished by the more obviously invented occasions on which the middle-aged bachelor, Sidney Gandle, and the spinster, Ivy Porch, create a delightful atmosphere of humorous sentiment. *The Spoilers* is the last novel for some years to be lightened with outright humorous relief or sentimental idealism. *The Shuttlecock* (1907), *The Enchantress* (1908), *Peter Vandy* (1909), *The Broken Honeymoon* (1908), and *Harry the Cockney* (1913) tell their stories without clowning or tenderness. You will find much witty and intelligent talk in *The Shuttlecock,* a deliciously ironic situation finely executed in *The Enchantress,* but the creed of a realism that is addressed to the disillusioned is observed steadily.

The keynote of the years of Pugh's intensest practise of the realistic novel, 1907 and 1908, seems perfectly struck by the city clerk hero of *The Broken Honeymoon,* who describes his feelings during courtship and the early days of an incompatible marriage. He tells how unmoved he is, on the eve of his marriage, by any of those passionate longings he had dreamed and read so much about, and how he becomes grotesquely miserable over his want of ecstasy. Of the passage revealing his state of mind he says: "I would strike it out if I did not feel that I am telling a part of a certain important truth for the first time, and that to omit so much would be to stultify myself and frustrate my object."

In the role of editor, Pugh writes a preface to *Harry the Cockney,* in which he recommends the book as being of particular interest because it portrays the life of a Cockney who, like himself, has broken the spell that holds the average Londoner inarticulate. He guarantees that the book is not ordinary fiction but genuine autobiography. *The Eyes of a Child* (1917), and *The Secret Years* (1923) contain obvious intimations to the reader that in them also he is being offered true reminiscences.

Punch and Judy (1913) and *The Quick and the Dead* (1914) are alike in that they are a mixture of realism and something else: the something else in the former is an unconvincing sentimentalism; in the latter it is a romanticized hysteria that is in fact, as far as the situation it offers can be studied, a case history of insanity. The sketches in *The Cockney at Home* (1914) are true to life as

far as our eyes can verify, and perhaps the best body of work in all of Pugh, certainly the richest and broadest in portrayal of lower London life. Without them the critical study of Cockneydom in *The City of the World* (1912) would be meaningless, for that study has the defect shared by most general discussions of dwellers in certain cities; it turns out to be only an analysis of human nature as it is found in the same conditions anywhere and everywhere.

The three least disguised autobiographical novels, *The Eyes of a Child, The Secret Years,* and *Empty Vessels* (1926) are done in a serious, truth-telling mood, but only the last is a novel in form. *Empty Vessels,* Pugh's last published novel, contains such an affirmation of mental independence and loyalty to truth as Pugh might have owned already when *The Man of Straw* was being written. The credo is not confessed by Pugh as his own literary doctrine, but is attributed to his hero, Benjamin Roost, who is Edwin Pugh by more proof than that of the assonance of their names. Pugh describes Roost as a man who had never been understood, and continued: "In this he shared the bitter heritage of most men who have striven after greatness by above all things being true to themselves. It was not in his nature to submit to unintelligent guidance or unreasoning control. It was laid upon him like a curse to think things out for himself and to do only those things which seemed to him the right thing to do."

2

After this brief view of practice and indirect confession of realism in the novels, we may turn to the expression of the theory in the essay entitled "Real Realism" in the volume of essays, *Slings and Arrows* (1916). There Pugh rails at the critics for using the term realism as meaning fiction that describes the sordid and squalid phases of life. That label so applied is a misnomer, for our life contains the lovely as well as the unlovely; in fact, he declares exaltedly: "Our hearts do realize that there is, all said and done, more idealism than materialism upon earth, and more nobleness than depravity in man." *Real Realism,* the term with which he would displace the narrow popular term, "consists in

giving a picture of life in which the light and shade are in their due proportions."

Secondly, in choosing his material, the perfect novelist would rightly apply the criterion of representative; his people and their actions would typify average humanity and their average doings. This he must do that his public, unlearned in humanity and almost unobserving, may accept his portraits as real by the test of their own experience.

But since life contains, in the average, queer people, surprising accidents, incongruities and improbabilities of every kind, "a certain tincture of abnormality in every comprehensive survey of existence is indispensably necessary to give it a normal appearance."

Another dictum in Pugh's credo is that real art "seizes life at its richest moments and presents it, preserved forever by its immaterial essence, from inconstancy and degradation."

The fourth point in the formula of realism concerns the writer personally. The novelist aims, of course, to give an impression of reality. To be able to give such an impression, his mind must have the gift of receiving impressions from life with the accuracy of a highly sensitized photographic plate. He may not alter in the slightest degree the impressions he has taken, and while he must exercise a reasonable selectiveness, to exclude the irrelevant, he may not permit any personal bias or prejudice to dictate his choice or rejection of details. He must not have strong opinions, lest he be inevitably moved to express them, and so destroy the objective reality of his work. He must not have a purpose.

In his preface to *A Child of the Jago* Arthur Morrison postulates that no phase of life is ever in itself unfit material for the novelist. "If the community have left horrible places and horrible lives before his eyes, then the fault is the community's, and to picture these places and these lives becomes not merely his privilege but his duty."

Pugh roughly collars these words, and holds them up scornfully as the wanton declaration of a specific purpose. He says: "A specific purpose . . . should have no place in any work of art that aspires to any kind of impersonal treatment."

But what, we ask, of the novel whose treatment is avowedly personal, perhaps it is cast in the form of an autobiography; shall it

be granted the privilege of a purpose? And if the writer is under one convention allowed to have a point to prove, can he still be a Real Realist?

Since Pugh is vague in his theory relating to a purpose, it is not surprising that he is contradictory when he applies it in criticism. If you begin reading the second chapter of *The Dickens Originals* (1912), you will find Dickens hailed as a *real realist,* one who is an idealist as well as a realist (in the popular sense); and if you will then turn back to the essay on Dickens in *Slings and Arrows,* you will find this equally ardent tribute: "It was Dickens who invented that fine and wholly admirable thing: the Novel with a Purpose." Let us leave the contradictions for a moment, and assume that Pugh meant that no novel should have a specific purpose.

These points, then, summarize the theoretical formula of Pugh: light and shade in their absolute proportions; selection of the average—to appeal to the understanding of common readers—tinged with the abnormal; the presentation of the richest moments in a life; and the freedom from any specific purpose or personal bias.

3

A comparison of Pugh's practice of the realistic novel and his theory of it shows that the formula is not what it promised to be, —a revelation of the critical spirit that guided spontaneous creation, or even a statement of the ideal goal, aimed at, though out of reach. The truth seems to be that he created spontaneously; when he theorized he drew haphazardly upon his critical reading, not upon an awareness of his own aims. The formula Pugh proposes is not a true description of the effects his temperament would naturally aim to create.

i

One hesitates to point to the fallacy in the law of light and shade in due proportion as Pugh poses it, because it seems so obvious a flaw, and yet it must be done, even with the certainty

of being obvious, to justify the work of Pugh in the face of his theory. A rule describing the creation of art should be founded not on what ought to be, but on what is possible. It is futile to say that a realist's mind ought to receive impressions of things as they are, when the facts of life exist only as social experiences viewed individually, and both circumstance and temperament may produce in the mind of one artist a dominant impression of shadow, as they may produce in the mind of another artist an impression of light. The axiom of art upon which all agree is that art is an individual impression of life; and no tenet of art can deny authority to an artist who records his own impressions of things truly. Pugh appears in his early life and by the bent of his mind and imagination to have been impressed by the strenuous, the unsettling, and self-destroying rather than by the reposeful, and materially satisfying. In his realistic work he has fulfilled the first law of the artist, rather than his own formula: he has been true to himself.

The range of sentimental feeling—which might be considered as a source of the light referred to in the first point—is small in Pugh. It is real in only two kinds of situations: when it exploits the life of a sensitive, precociously imaginative boy who treads a lonely way through seven of the novels; and, second, when it grows out of the character of a shy, and perhaps unattractive woman, who secretly dreams of romance. Positive emotion other than sentiment is to be found, but as passion, the passion of a mother for a weak-willed son, of a woman for her lover, or the green-sickness and jealousy of a young man. If self-pity were to be viewed, with pity for others, as a sentiment, a third situation might be added: the loneliness of the Cockney who rises through his art or other native talents to a higher and alien plane.

To realize how limited is his capacity for sentiment, consider, how, in his first book, he finds himself at a loss for an ending to a little tear-producer, entitled, "Mama's Angel," which is styled at the very beginning as a "rather pretty story." The sensitive orphaned children, Mamie and Fred, long for their dead mother who, despite her poverty, had given them such memories of loving-kindness as could not be dislodged by a righteously charitable aunt. They have heard from a superstitious slavey that the ghost of

their mother will return one year later to the belfry out of which she had fallen on Christmas eve. Two days before Christmas they catch a serious cold, which becomes worse after they leave their beds on the morning before Christmas for an early start to the church. They are intercepted and put back to bed; but that evening, literally in a high fever, they escape to the church and begin to creep up the steps of the belfry. Pugh ends that tale: "They met their mother on the thirty-second step, counting from the flags in the porch."

That touch, smart as it may be technically, is not inspired by genuine sentiment, and would have been impossible to a man with any power of unself-conscious pathos.

The sentimentalic ending of *Mother-Sister,* which would have been so easy for Dickens to make convincing, is artificial in structure and manner.

ii

How poorly Pugh obeyed the injunction that a realist should choose average characters performing average actions is understood after another swift glance over his protagonists and their careers. We can grant the realism of *A Street in Suburbia* by that law, but is the average man so calculating and hypocritical and selfish as John Coldershaw *(The Man of Straw),* or as prone to drink himself into delirium tremens; does he become a drunkard as soon as he rises in the social scale, as do Mark Gillies *(The Heritage)* and Gideon Bolsover *(The Fruit of the Vine)*? Would the average evangelical lay preacher kill the man who has seduced and deserted the woman he loved, like Peter Cowcross *(The Spoilers)*? Does the normal man of business resemble Peter Vandy in sacrificing everything in life to the one goal of achieving influence and wealth, and after winning them feel he has made a horrible mistake? Is the average Cockney a Harry Weaver, who breaks the shackles of vulgarity, and attains to a sensitive life and a notable career as K. C. and M. P.? Perhaps he becomes a brilliant marine engineer, like Roger Corrillian *(The Quick and the Dead),* or a "disgustingly popular novelist," like David Pallister *(The Shuttlecock),* or a promising young novelist like Benjamin

Roost *(Empty Vessels)* or Tobias Morgan *(The Secret Years)*? One cannot believe that the average Cockney boy has the precocious imagination of a Tony Drum, and a Punch Farr *(Punch and Judy)*, or the extraordinary sensitiveness and literary talent of a Tobias Morgan. It is only in his two books of narrative sketches, *A Street in Suburbia* and *The Cockney at Home*, that he fulfills, and even then not strictly, the law he lays down, of writing about average people and average actions. And those two books are closest in material and in spirit to the manner of Dickens. In truth the ingredient of abnormality you will find in bulk rather than as a "tincture" to give a final plausible touch: introspective and highly sensitive people make up most of the protagonists in the novels; even the solicitor's clerk of literary aspiration, Ferdinand Smallpiece *(The Broken Honeymoon)*, whose rise above mediocrity is doubtful, is one of the breed, and they are not the normal: biological influences and the Juggernaut of commerce hold down their numbers effectively, if unmercifully.

iii

That the richest moments in the lives of his people are related is proved in every novel and story. Of course, the quality of that richness is limited by the character. In *A Street in Suburbia*, a cross-section of squalid life, you are offered a courting, a marriage feast, memories of days in school—not the days themselves, you notice—a meeting of a debating society, a scene of gossip exchanged in Mrs. Luzzell's provision store, a funeral, a benefit raffle in aid of a childless widow, the birth of a child late in the life of its parents, and its sudden death: surely there is no stale and unprofitable moment here. And, no matter what the book, or who the characters are that have been given you as company, you will find throughout all the realistic work of Pugh no scene that is not in its material rich, that does not adequately stir and express the emotional life of its actors. You will find no faking, no deliberate scenes of character-exposition. You need no better evidence to prove that Pugh's instinct for values is almost unique among novelists for its sensitiveness, its stubborn rejection of the trifling and insignificant.

iv

The last rule in the theory, referring to a purpose in the realistic novel, is in practice flouted consciously. If one paid meticulous attention to the qualifying phrase, "any kind of impersonal treatment," he might exclude from his evidence *The Fruit of the Vine,* because its treatment may be regarded as personal; but the technique of story combined with comment on story has equally the appearance of an impersonal treatment. Furthermore, it is not in the course of telling his reminiscences but as interspersed comment upon them as material for a book that Bolsover declares, "This is a tract. A book with a purpose." And the traditions of the realistic novel persuade us to accept what is said by an actor who is the evident projection of the author's personality as an equivalent of the author's own opinion, especially if it be said in a momentary detachment from the story.

The Man of Straw, Heritage, The Broken Honeymoon, Peter Vandy, Harry the Cockney, The Eyes of a Child, The Secret Years, and *Empty Vessels* have, in varying degrees, the flavor of the purpose story. The degradation through drink of the only child of ignorant, narrowly religious parents; the degeneracy of the second and third generations descended from an alcoholic maniac; the confession of an unhappy courtship and honeymoon; insanity rewarding a man who has striven only for wealth; the loneliness that saddens a man risen out of his class; the agonies of childhood and early youth for which a stupid parent is to blame; the incompatibility of a marriage of mixed classes: these themes surely smack of the novel of purpose.

4

Out of his own tetralogue of arbitrary rules Pugh obeyed only one law, the most important of them all: that the realist shall portray the richest moments in the lives of his people.

The essence of the matter seems to be that the writer who aspires to be a realist promises that he will be true to himself, courageously drawing whatever conceptions of life he has arrived at by the natural confluence of observation and temperament.

Judged by that primary standard, Pugh has won ample authority for hearing in a higher court of literary appeal.

THE STUDENT OF HUMAN NATURE

In an essay, "The Novelist as Expert,"[1] Pugh proposes such a definition of the character and capacities the novelist need own as has obtained in England ever since Fielding outlined it in various critical chapters of *Tom Jones*.[2]

Pugh enumerates these essentials. The novelist must not only have exceptional genius for both understanding, and himself feeling, the experiences of his fellows, but he must make it his business to know what his fellows are thinking and feeling. He must be large-minded, tolerant, charitable, a sympathetic and impartial observer and judge. By profession he is a "student of human nature;" in practice, a man of the world. When Fielding laid down the same general rule he had in mind only the background of the writer's art; but Pugh advises further that the specialized knowledge of authors be made use of by commissions investigating social ways and wants. A great body of accurate knowledge would become available, because, "there is no phase of modern life upon which some novelist or other is not a supreme authority." All who would ask what knowledge any author may be relied upon to possess would be referred to his novels, which are his credentials as expert on some especial phase of human nature.

Our consideration of Pugh as an expert in human ways shall rest on our search through his credentials, the novels, stories, and essays. The divisions into which we are grouping the evidence of Pugh's knowledge are these:

i. life in the large, and the social relations of man;
ii. the motives that, unfortunately, guide man's conduct;
iii. this thing called love;
iv. the nature of woman;
v. the problem of the artist; and,
vi. how men can be happy.

i

His view of the plan of life is no original one in the English novel. It is the view of the satirical realist, the interpretation of

Fielding and of Thackeray. That outlook finds the world very like a theatre, "in which most of the exciting incidents take place behind the scenes; in which the cues are often missed or taken up so tardily that the whole interest of the piece flags and wilts away to nothing whilst the call-boy wanders around in the outer darkness summoning the appointed player to appear before the footlights. The scenery is often hopelessly inappropriate too; the properties are so ill-made that they break off short in the hand or let you down with a bump when you lean your weight against them at supreme crises. And the prompter has generally lost his script; the curtain never falls at the opportune moment; and when the author is called for he has invariably left the house—very prudently, since only brickbats await him, as a rule, and the only members of the audience who have sat out the performance are critics with very definite and accurate aims."[3]

Life is such a hopelessly illogical, improbable affair: the truest happenings are so hard to believe; the qualities of human nature are so utterly inconsistent; what we want is withheld, what we have others covet; what we get has not been asked for.[4] Since life is such a helter-skelter of the undiscoverable and the incoherent, there can be no science of human nature; many have tried their hand at inventing an orderly scheme, and failed. Every day we remark of people we have known well that we never suspected they were capable of some action that was unlike anything they had ever done before:[5] the truth seems to be that most men live and die without realizing the potentialities they hold within themselves.[6] The last word in motive rests with the biologists, who have reduced motives to the primitive instinct of self-preservation and the herd instinct of demanding conformity.[7]

Between the two antagonists man has to face, Death and Life, Death is the easier to overcome, Life the more merciless.[8] The struggle for existence is not decided by strength. Survival is as subject to the law of improbability as everything else, for it is the strongest who have gone to the wall, from ante-diluvian monsters to the intelligent, honest, and fellow-thoughtful of our own time. It is the weak, the cunning, the elusive and tenacious who live.[9]

The paradoxicalness of life is discernable also in the struggle of men to achieve. To the thoughtful onlooker the world is full of people who can't do things, and yet do them.[10] And "it is usually those who are doing best who are most anxious that others should do better."[11] The logic of physics, however, holds, in that the man who aspires to play any prominent part in the affairs of the world must inevitably throw a shadow upon one competitor and perhaps cut off some of the limelight thrown upon another.[12] It also seems often true that if a man takes it for granted that he is somebody rather especial and lets the world know his assumption, the world will agree with him.[13] It quickly judges a man for the real thing by the sign of the irrelevant accessory: in its opinion, "long hair is an excellent substitute for genius."[14] And greatness, even when it is genuine, is nothing more than the possessing in an unusual abundance the qualities most esteemed by a contemporary generation. It is not the great man who makes history, but the crisis that makes famous whatever men happen to share the limelight while it is occurring.[15] The truth that "There is a king whom all obey, And his name is circumstance,"[16] applies to the great figure of history and the criminal as well.[17]

A circumstance helpful to greatness may appear at the outset to be a handicap. The very loneliness of a man, his being deprived of the tender influence of love and care and interest, his never winning sympathy and understanding from others, his being repelled when he would give, may force him to gigantic efforts to obtain these intimate needs in the proxy of fame. "There is much too much cant talked and written about great men's mothers. If the truth were known it would be realized that almost all great men have, in the larger sense, been motherless."[18]

Though not reasonable, it is still true that the young and the inexperienced are so cocksure they understand everything: they make up their minds about everything and act as if they could never think otherwise.[19] Such a truth is obvious. But brilliant insight pictures "the shyness of the old [as] not of that exquisite palpitant kind, born of secret arrogance and lustful pride which refines and enhances sensation in youth, even whilst it tortures; but a cold frightened feeling that is excruciatingly self-contemptu-

ous at bottom in spite of all the cajolements and sophistries of what is paradoxically termed worldly wisdom."[20]

The qualities that youth derives from its elders do not make for harmony: the strong-willed child of strong-willed parents will rebel from what by inheritance is intolerable to him, the imposition of another's will. "Like clings to like only in its compromises. In subjection or opposition it is always in revolt against itself."[21]

Of the effect of matrimony upon a man Pugh has little to say,—he did not marry until he was fifty—except for the consequent state of mind that regards "security of income . . . the one supreme blessing that a sane man desires."[22]

Things said about social customs reflect Pugh's own experiences as Cockney lad meeting the gracious folk of cultured circles. The sensitiveness that sharply stimulated his insight, made him anticipate as well as observe the patronizing air of the well-to-do. Again and again he complains that tact carries the suggestion of an insult to the alertly intuitive person; only the stupid and blind should be exposed to its crude buffers. It is better to be frank and harsh than studiously suave, as the conventions expect men to be.[23]

In ethics, as well as in etiquette, one may be right in acting contrarily to the orthodox code. Although society scorns the man who retracts a promise given to a woman whom he has discovered to be unworthy, "the conventionally rotten thing is not only the expedient thing to do, but the right thing."[24] So speaks Pugh in the voice of the unnamed Friend of Bolsover. The proof that it is the author speaking is the essay in *Slings and Arrows* entitled, "Love and Let Love." Here Pugh argues against the fallacy supported by law that a woman may jilt a man without blame to the woman, but that a man, after he has publicly betrothed himself to a woman must marry her, or be liable to a suit for breach of promise. The period of betrothal is admitted to be the time of trial, during which either may find the other unsuited to the life-long partnership. Satirically Pugh asks if it is not the convention that a man begs and the woman promises; and if it is so, why does the law insinuate that the woman begs and the man promises?

He is speaking again when he puts into the mouth of Pallister a vehement objection to the morality that condemns the "living in open sin" of people whose reasons for not marrying are satisfactory to themselves. Not all can marry as soon as they reach the marriageable age; and the resort of sinning in "a hole-and-corner way" compelled by the code of respectability is vile. "Why not, then . . . face the immutable facts of our common fallen human nature, and so save all these secret, silly shames and dodgeries and falsehoods, with their inevitable evil concomitants of a foul slave-traffic and an impossible standard of morality that no man can possibly live up to."[25] And on the subject of love as a prelude to marriage, the detective, Sprottle, solves his greatest mystery, the reason for mothers-in-law, when he says, "There would never be any bridegrooms at all, I believe, if it were not for the girl's mother's vigilance."[26]

The convention of truth-telling is qualified by the comment that "the world owes much to its lighthearted liars."[27] Religion is very guardedly referred to, but Pugh, rebelling from the dourness of the little sects, believes with Holy Jo, of *Punch and Judy,* that people must be made happy before they can be made good. And what of the sins of women and men? What do they add to the sum total of life? The wise old solicitor, Pattenden,—wise though an idealist — vouchsafes the answer, that "the wild oats (of women) raise the devil and all of a crop. But ours—men's—they perish in the ground they are sown in, and lie there hidden and rot . . . and perhaps—who knows?—even help to enrich the soil."[28]

On the justice of each man's lot a spokesman of Pugh's, the humanitarian novelist, Dole, declares, "I am happier than I was meant to be because I have been lucky enough to stumble upon a great secret. I have discovered that in the long run we get the things that are best for us, even if it is penal servitude for life."[29] What of the suffering that makes life so bitter a progress for many? "So much blood and so many tears must always go to the enrichment of the soil; it is hard on those who weep and bleed, but it is good for the crop."[30] That is the hope, alike of a character in a novel, Saxon Basterfield, and of Pugh writing in an essay on "Heroines and Heroes."

ii

The generalizations on human motives are often cynical. To the implied question, Why go on living? Pugh responds, "We are all putting up for the present for the sake of the future in the intervals of regretting the past."[31] Cynical is the interpretation of what men say about others. It is relief at discovering the world contains people as bad as themselves that urges men to proclaim the faults of others.[32] The man who whispers the secrets of his friends shouts his own from the house-tops; who speaks well of all other men is one about whom nothing but good can be spoken.[33] It is easier to hate a man for his faults than to like him for his virtues, but easiest to hate him for his virtues.[34] Even more pessimistic is Pugh's acceptance of the proverbial opinion that to know people thoroughly is to lose interest in them.[35] Trust seems warrantable in no one: a man never knows who are his friends until he is in need of them, and then he discovers only those who are not his friends.[36] More trenchant is Bolsover's opinion that not one man in a score is capable of friendship, and not one woman in a hundred.[37] And, of course, if friendship is so rare an element, it follows that gratitude is the last thing that a man with knowledge of life would expect from one to whom he had been kind.[38]

iii

The many observations upon love in the writing of Pugh mirror artist as clearly an analyst; they argue a pragmatic, not a speculative path to understanding. Of course, the final revelation of that understanding must come from the portraits themselves, but in this field of human affairs, as in others, a fair idea of the author's insight may be obtained from a study of things said by characters and author-commentator. Those opinions fall into three groups, viewing the subject with particular reference to the man, or to the woman, or to the contrast and mingling of the sexes. That there will be contradictions ought not surprise us, but the fact is that Pugh is more, rather than less, consistent in his interpretations. He matured very early. It might have been better for

his art if he could have been what he knew was a happy ideal, the man who has remained a child.

Truths that apply to one sex may apply to the other, of course, but in these first thoughts the reference is particularly to the man.

Unaccountable is the make-believe at love that is the youth's game. He acts the tender lover, the rhapsodist, and knows all the time it is not the real thing. "Perhaps it was for practice that we did it," is Harry Weaver's unsatisfying guess for the instinctive play.[39]

The first love of a man is only a kind of self-love, the worship of a figment of fancy, a splendid shadow that men most happily pursue when they pursue in vain.[40] It begins in illusion and ends in disillusion. The holiest emotion of which the human heart is capable is that love that children sometimes feel, a pure sentiment, unspoiled by any of the ulterior motives or the crudenesses that mar the love of the mature.[41] "Love is an aberration of the senses that must pass, in the common nature of things, if it is not to degenerate into obsession of all character. And love is not, by any means, the universal passion that a thick-witted world proclaims it to be. There is a faculty of love; and so very few men, and fewer women, possess it that if it were the sole cause leading to matrimony the world would speedily become depopulated."[42]

Few men marry the women they love.[43] Especially do they not marry the women who answer to their ideal; because love seeks equality in the mate, and the living ideal overwhelms the dreamer with its excellence.[44] While a man loves a woman for being unique, he marries her because she is typical:[45] she is safer so. Experience with women does not broaden man's knowledge, but only confounds it.[46] His first real insight into a woman's nature is obtained by a means that often ends the further use of insight: marriage;[47] and the first lesson he learns after marriage is also the last lesson,—the need for pretending.[48] If they have had episodes, as most men have, they should not tell their wives.[49]

Comments about the nature of women passed by men who speak the mind of the author, and revelations made by women whose truth is subtly or obviously vouched for, fall into the classes of the sympathetic and the unfavorable. A simple definition of what love may mean to a woman—or a man—is given by the drudge in

a Soho restaurant, who explains, "It's when you're so fond of somebody that you leave off being fond of yourself any more."[50] To a clever, vainer woman of a leisured class, half the joy of being loved is derived from the certainty that she is lovely to her beloved.[51] The most precious hours for a woman come in those last days of courting in which she still rules her man absolutely, for marriage becomes a compromise and a sacrifice.[52] Yet women are intended for marriage and motherhood. However bad loneliness is for a man, it is worse for a woman.[53]

The impulses of a woman's love are no more paradoxical than those that prompt a man's love. A woman may love a man for the outwardly prosaic and inwardly exalting reason that he has her very own humiliating faults.[54] And again, a woman may like her man as well for the things she does not like as for those that please her.[55] She may also love a man because she is sorry for him.[56] A brilliant woman in one of the novels declares that a woman is usually in love with two men; the one she loves, the other she pities, and she marries the man she pities. The man she loves is the man her husband could have been, but has been prevented by weaknesses of character from becoming.[57] And so a woman's love may exist side by side with contempt.[58]

The good woman, whose love is pure and real, beyond the body, is not jealous of her lover's past, does not care what the body part of him has been or done, if she loves him. She is only too glad to forgive all that he would condemn in her, for the joy of being possessed by him. "We like to be the first—yes. But we would rather be the last than never be his at all."[59] She is more tolerant of the man sinning than of the woman whom he might be regarded as having seduced: intuition tells her how much more easily a woman can manage the man in sexual matters than the man the woman, and that it is the woman who decides.[60]

The work of her own that may be busying her becomes a matter of small account as soon as love enters her life and absorbs her into the life of her lover-husband. The intelligent woman realizes that "the woman must always belong to the man," and faces the inevitable truth that "the man belongs to the world."[61] She may have much to do with his success. "Wherever there is a public hero there is usually a private heroine."[62] The woman, whatever

her relation to the man, has spared him anxieties, shared his bitter moods, endured his indifference and his harshness, and cheered him on, faltering neither in love nor help. "Man-making is a woman's business mostly. . . . Men without women are like clocks without hands, ticking away from morn till night, with never anything to show for all their noise and fuss."[63] And the man who is self-made is poorly made, for he has missed the power of a mother's love to make his character strong and consistent, and sturdy.[64]

And it is the women who would seem to have outlived their feeling for sentiment who are the more comprehending and spiritual and compassionate, who bring peace and healing and comfort, while the lovely fresh young women who fascinate men's eyes, are so commonly crude and cruel:—another instance of the paradoxical nature of life.[65]

There seems to be almost a conspiracy against women that condemns them to do the menial jobs, to battle with dirt and dust, so that man may eat well and live cleanly. Women are endlessly engaged in cleaning up the mess that men make; drudgery and worrying make the lot of a woman a heavy one. "The whole world is wet with women's tears," the unhumanly selfish Peter Vandy cries, at the height of his short-lived love for Clara Fillery.[66] But that such suffering gives meaning to a woman's life is the thought spoken as chorus in *The Man of Straw:* "Sighs are the commas in a woman's life, and straighten the story of it. Delete them, and there remains only a fibreless jumble of inconsequences."[67] The helplessness and weakness of women, very real despite their dominating airs and mocking poise, must stir the pity of all warm-hearted men, and rouse their protective instincts.[68] Her greater sexualness threatens her with the possibility that what may be a trifling episode to the man who has won her heart and gone away, may be for her a tragic crisis. "The man smiles and beckons, kisses and passes on, and goes his way, scatheless. The woman loves and suffers and falls—and it may be, lies where she has fallen. He forgets. She must remember. He may sin and sin again, with ever less and less compunction. She sins no more. For where there is no choice between good and evil, there can be only misery and folly, but never any more sin."[69]

Women realize that the best husband is a kind of grown-up child;[70] the secret of his charm is his direct appeal to the maternal And the maternal nature of a woman inclines her to regard all good men as children.[71] The man who is helpless in the little things at home, and whose carelessness make him the object of fussy attentions is an everlasting joy to the maternal woman.[72] The man of ordinary exterior is more desirable than the handsome man because there comes a time when the prettiest woman looks ordinary, and in that time of distress, an ordinary-looking mate is the best consolation.[73] A woman never feels sure that her man loves her; and she suspects the reason is that the man himself is in doubt, for "love is to men a thing apart."[74]

To the humorist turned dreamer over childhood joys there comes the dream of what motherhood should be: "It means entering into the hearts and investing the souls of their boys and girls, becoming as it were their other self—a wiser, gentler, but real other self. It means what stained-glass windows in a cathedral seem to mean. And it also means a whooping, fluttering, flushed and dishevelled creature of a thousand radiant charms, who doesn't mind getting hot or untidy or dirty. It means a sort of combination or blend of a Bank-Holiday Harriet and a Madonna."[75]

There is also a shadowy side to Pugh's interpretation of women. Depressing to a boy is his first insight into the dominance of love over a woman's life: it is so all-important to her, so crassly physically a thing.[76] The instinct of maternity of itself brings her nearer than man to the primitive brute.[77] Her tastes, no matter how disguised, naturally seek the cruder flavors of life. The traditional idea that women are softer and more sentimental than men is an error. Women are actually afraid of sentiment, because it is sincere and revealing; and they tend to conceal rather than reveal themselves.[78] They discuss their thoughts among themselves much less than do men, and they are perpetually on their guard with one another lest they be surprised into expressing their true feelings or convictions. They do not try to deceive men,—men are too easy; but they strive hard to deceive other women. And they are all engaged in a conspiracy among themselves to preserve a convention that not one believes: that men and women love one another for a multitude of reasons other than the sexual. Their

deception of others may be practiced even upon themselves, until they believe that their sex is a negligible part of their personality. Among themselves women conspire zealously to keep from men the secret that in sexual matters they are as human as men. For that end women school themselves, thwarting instincts and impulses for the reward of becoming the complement of the man instead of his creature, his mate instead of his toy.[79] Their natural taste for men has always been crude: they prefer the big and coarse, the satyr type.[80]

A woman's reason for marrying may do her credit, or it may not. She may wish simply to become the center of attraction, to make sure of audience and spectators.[81] While there are women without whose sacrificing help men would never have won positions of honor, there are just as many, or more women, who are jealous of the man's love for his work, and who passionately try to absorb his whole interest.[82]

"A woman is peculiarly the prey of words." Her better judgment is of little use in recalling a promise given in haste,[83] and she resorts to self-deception to justify herself and maintain her self-respect.[84] She is passionately strong in her moral weaknesses, prone to be swept off her feet by a devil-may care mood that has been kindled by words of adoration.[85] Soft words and caressing ways mean far more to a woman than kindly deeds and mute devotion. The selfish sentimental men are dearer to women than the most unselfish men who do not sentimentalize things. "A woman will forgive a man almost any sin but the sin of dumb worship."[86]

A woman is illogically apt to scorn the very thing that best contents her.[87] She may give her very best love to the man who does not try to win her heart.[88] She secretly mocks men for their incorrigible idealism, for their appraising a woman by her gestures and appearance, but is glad for these failings too.[89]

A woman may always be the master of a man. Listen to the paralyzed dancer, the mother of Lydia Mersey, in a part of her tirade: "Men! I know what men are. . . . Easy enough, if you only hate them, and despise them enough, and do not show it too much."[90]

iv

The nature of love, and the relations of the sexes are probed to a depth one might expect of nothing short of a special study, and with the same comprehensiveness.

Of course, all the world is a field for romance; the flower may bloom in the unlikeliest places.[91] Love is not an emotion that will always move the whole person toward the loved one: judgment may vehemently disapprove what the heart commends.[92] When one needs to argue in favor of his love, he does not love: "reason is treason in love."[93] Love is a game of chance and skill, but luck is bound to go against the novice. It is learned only through tears and prayers and fasting.[94]

"First Love is self-love. First love is too precious to be squandered on realities." A man loves his dream of a woman, a woman her dream of a man: both wake to a disillusion.[95] A man's deadliest rival is not another man, but the glorious ideal image of him the woman has created, as the girl's deadly rival is the man's ideal portrait of her.[96] For women it is true as for men that "love is a passing madness, a sort of sweet delirium;" and the conventional opinion that love is all a woman's life, in its manifestations of wifehood and motherhood, is a lie upheld by the conspiracy of those who have loved.[97] Love is not a sentiment of pure happiness, for it may plunge its possessor into gloom even while he is rejoicing.[98]

It is better to have loved and lost, for second love may be a better love, as a second fight after a defeat may win a more decided victory.[99] But a virgin heart is tokened by the clumsiness of a lover.[100] "He makes love well who makes love badly. . . . To beware of the lover who is never ridiculous, and the sweetheart who is never unreasonable: these are golden rules to observe in the game.[101]

The sweetest intimacy of lovers is that which comes through the ordinary incidents of everyday domestic life, for "love thrives best, not on the roses and raptures of passion, but on daily bread."[102] The everydayness of marriage really introduces a man and woman to one another, and makes them see how unlike they are the ideal picture. The very thing that disappoints them ought to make them

most cheerful, the thrilling discovery that the other is lovably human, essentially of the earth-earthy.[103]

The sexes are not so distinct as their bodies might make them appear to be: a woman may be masculine mentally, and a man have dominantly feminine traits. It is common knowledge that girls take more after their fathers, and boys after their mothers.[104] Because of the mingling of the sexes in one body there can be no talk of the superiority of one sex or the other: in life the sum total of abilities masculine and feminine arrives at an equality.[105] It is a masculine trait, that of toiling to save for a rainy day with eyes fixed on a tomorrow that never comes; it is a woman's thought to find the joy that is in today, with no care for the morrow.[106]

The period of the honeymoon is to the man a time of concentrated combat to settle the question once and for all of who will dominate. He goes into the battle handicapped by his own chivalry and by the superior wisdom of the woman, gathered from many advisers of her own sex, in the art of domination. A couple should be allowed to settle their own adjustments without the danger of advice, should experience the shock of their humanness and build their new lives upon the discovery. Since women have a great advantage when the honeymoon is spent in one place, and since they do not show to advantage while traveling, in contrast with the man, who is in his element as a traveler, it were wise for the bridegroom to hustle his bride about during the first and decisive stages of the honeymoon. A quiet spot away from home must lead to boredom and the woman's leisurely inspection of her man and to sharp conflicts of temperament. But it would be best if that "accursed institution," the honeymoon, were abolished forever.[107]

The comment on the efforts of women to establish themselves as equal to men in executive genius is not to their glory. The nimble-witted Jubal Coopless argues that if woman were man's equal she would have attained equality by now; the excuse that she was busy rearing children does not explain her failure, for the intimacy with her children in their formative years would favor her chances of asserting her dominance.[108] The frank-spoken novelist, Cora Merriam, declares that most women would give up their aspirations for the delight of being men's playthings: they like to be fussed

up and fondled and flattered and waited on, and know that men are pleased to take care of them. They know also that the moment they begin to insist on their rights they are going to lose their privileges. They would rather have their privileges.[109]

v.

An artist himself, and a subjective one, Pugh naturally ascribed to other than artistic natures tendencies that belong to the artist alone, but he also recognized the peculiar problem the artist has in fitting himself into life. The artist is a man of feeling primarily, sentimentalizing all things and all people, living in a mist of golden illusion or under the pall of gloomy disappointment.[110] It is his passion for romance, for the emotional and dramatic, that unsettles him, for his craving ends in disappointment, either from the inadequacy of the event, or his own failure to live up to its fullest possibilities. He is so used to dreaming the orderly dreams that are the stuff of art that reality fails to satisfy him; it is so commonplace, so lacking in interest or theme. But his compensation is that he can be in his dreams whatever he wills: he can look into his heart to learn every secret of human nature; he can transform things as they are into the loveliness they should be. But one emotion he cannot control, genuine passion. The artist's feeling of woeful insufficiency is most tragic when he would love and cannot.[111]

The artist never begins by falling in love with a real woman: like all other mortals, he creates a figment of his imagination, and endows it with the charm of conventionally perfect womanhood.[112] In him the emotional burden is apt to be a heavy one, for there is likely to be as much of the woman as of the man in his nature.[113] It is no wonder, then, that with his unquenchable thirst for romance, and his unstable sexual nature, that the artist should be a fool in his love affairs, anticipating even impulse, and far outstripping the insight and judgment of which he is really capable.[114] The artist can never be perfectly satisfied with himself nor with anything that is his; and no one and nothing can please him. Everything and everyone about him is subject to his secret scrutiny and criticism; any little defect grates upon him.[115]

His life ought to be so arranged as to render him seclusion whenever he wishes it for the undistracted play of his thoughts and dreams.[116] He should belong wholly to himself, live apart in spirit, even from his wife. He should remain an island, and cultivate himself according to his own light, and be guarded from the thousand interferences with which the world might cripple his creative spirit. For his mate the artist should choose a maternal woman, one who would be endlessly patient and loving, who would love him for himself alone. She would never worry him about his writing, but cook his dinner and darn his socks, and wonder why people think him so clever, when to her he is a helpless child to be mothered and cared for and guarded against himself. The woman of brilliant mind and forceful personality would be apt to trespass upon his individuality, perhaps try to improve him, and so make both unhappy.

He must never yield to the habit of listening to flattery: once he has learned to rely upon that stimulant, his judgment becomes as fuddled as if he were a drug addict, his craving becomes unappeasable, and his character wholly debauched.[117]

vi

In Pugh's devious knowledge of human ways, we can discern what amounts to a philosophy of happiness, that embodies both the conditions of life which make happiness attainable, and what man of his own will may do to win it.

It seems a lucky arrangement of providence, sparing man so much pain, that man's spirit should be weak when his flesh is reduced;[118] what agonies would the poor suffer if that were not true. This thing called happiness is a state of mind, a state of being, independent of material conditions. The proportion of happiness and unhappiness is the same among the lowly and wealthy. "The rain falls alike on the just and the unjust, and we all make our own sunshine."[119] Though it may be doubted if the thinker can ever be truly happy,[120] happiness is, in general, a product of temperament, a continuous state of being, not a paroxysm: those who are happiest are least aware that they are happy. "Our dear Maeterlinck would say that happiness is a bright blue bird singing

in the sunshine. But he is wrong. Happiness is a black bird that flies by night. One does not know that it is there." So says the wise Mme. Poussier, to cool Una Vani's ardor for the musician Crispin Pix.[121]

Of positive help is the advice that if troubles are faced instead of feared, they will appear small, like shadows that one stoops to examine.[122] If one realizes, through desolating insight, that he is a coward, he should remember that since the world is full of cowards the only essential is to feign courage.[123] One may make a more thorough conquest of himself by realizing that fear, while it often serves as a deterrent from the rash or suicidal, is largely a hallucination, an emotion experienced usually in anticipation or in retrospect.[124] When one is intensely miserable, it is well to believe that "to wish oneself dead is to be very much alive indeed."[125] And if it does not help toward positive happiness, the thought that we are never so happy achieving our wish as we expected to be, may console us when we grieve because we have not gotten what we wanted.[126]

Illusion keeps the soul alive and sweet.[127] The novelist Dole says, "The golden thread of romance, illusion, hope, idealism . . . is that single glittering strand which interweaves the grey woof of everyday existence and gilds the very stuff of life. To follow the gleam of the golden thread is to make the best both of this world and the next. . . . The way of romance and illusion, of hope and idealism, is the way of light. . . . We . . . who follow the golden thread are such stuff as dreams are made of. And where shall any man find happiness except in dreams?"[128] If an exertion of the will does not succeed in giving one a permanent faith in the romanticism of life, one can still achieve "that highest philosophy of all, a laughing philosophy," by way of deep feeling and suffering.[129]

The best type of man will always retain the spirit of boyhood, will always be able to look upon the world with the eyes of a child, and be the happier for doing so.[130]

While sentiment is good, it is good only in moderation: "sentiment is very like the sugar icing on a plain heavy cake otherwise devoid of sweetness."[131] In a different mood, the author declares that as often as not, the wisdom of the heart is truer than the

wisdom of the head.[132] It is the stuff of common sense, perhaps the most profound wisdom of all. It is supported by the simple and powerful logic of primitive emotion, of passions and feelings.[133] The acuteness with which children read character is a perfect demonstration of it: "The quiet clear eyes of a child see things and people as they really are and not as their own eyes see them—through mists of prepossession and prejudice, use and wont."[134]

The sense of a very strict moral duty as a help toward enjoyment of life would be incongruous with the individualistic philosophy that has been outlined. The nearest approach to it is in the counsel that Uncle Holebright gives on his death-bed to Tobias Morgan. The tolerant old Christian reaffirms the commandment of Jesus that one should become as a little child, and draws from it the inner meaning, "Be kind. . . . Love one another."[135] More in tune with the entire philosophy of Pugh is the advice, again avuncular, which the charitable pagan Uncle Algernon passes on to Harry Weaver: "Keep all the commandments you can, but don't worry about those you can't."[136]

vii

It is evident that Pugh read his philosophy of human kind in no book but that of experience. The sadness of it, the tone of disappointment that sounds through every part of its creed is explained both by the intimations of his work and the known circumstances of his life. It is the philosophy of a man who suffers from the heaviest possible curse, complete disillusionment. The English novel offers no one whose perspicacity is more deep and sure, or capable of a more varied attunement of understanding than Pugh's, and no one who has turned that gift of penetration into life so constantly and mercilessly in upon himself. The curse of perfect insight into himself paralyzed whatever attempts he made to escape from his loneliness and his habitual brooding. He longed for membership in the society of the well-to-do, and yet scorned that society for its dominance by stupid convention. Scorning what he desired to be, scorning his very inability to escape from his class, scorning himself for his unworthy desire, contemptuous of himself for being a Cockney of a humble plane,

he exaggerated the human failings in himself through a sensitiveness that would justify only one emotion, complete despair.

The despair resulting from Pugh's sensitiveness, and insight, and habit of self-centredness is the reason why his great books have never been so popular as their sheer literary and psychological merits entitle them to be. Disillusionment may be enjoyable, but it is agonizing to most when it is as serious and as deep as Pugh's. *A Street in Suburbia, Mother-Sister, The Spoilers,* and that incomparable *The Cockney at Home,* are not enough to win a steady reading public which has heard of *The Man of Straw, The Heritage, The Fruit of the Vine, The Shuttlecock,* and the rest.

The fascination of self-torture was strong upon Pugh. Book upon book appeared of such self-portraits as are to be studied in the next chapter.

THE ASPIRING COCKNEY

The practice of a novelist to draw himself over and over again in separate characters distributed over several books is common to the art of the novel, and a matter of course to the introspective writer. The literary forms of that self-portrayal depend upon the sum of potential and actual traits within the author, his exercise of selection, and the peculiar mood of creation,—sober, controversial, lyrical, hysterical, fantastic, idealistic, or a combination of moods. So Pugh's master, Dickens, embodied parts of his essential nature in a score of people created in different moods, especially in his children. He is Oliver Twist, the horror of whose youth and the heaviness of whose handicap are depressing memories darkened by contemplation to a gloomier pitch. He is Nicholas Nickleby, the boy of fifteen or so who, in his reveries, plays protector of sister and mother, battling villainous giants, a David smiting his Goliath over and over with no fear of defeat. He is in little Nell the child beginning to realize that his elders are humanly weak, and dreaming himself the savior guardian, the giver of endless comfort and love; and he is Kit Nubbles too, the child awakened to the knowledge that love is dual,—it is soul and it is body,—and who has not yet learned to reconcile them as one, but adores ethereal Nell from afar, while he tolerates the homage of the potential housewife Barbara. He is little Dorrit, mainstay of a weedy family; and he is Pip, the ambitious boy who scales the heights and discovers that they are cold. And, of course, Dickens is most frankly David Copperfield, sensitive, romantic child, gifted with a nature that is inspired by life, and with genius for letters.

The range of a writer's emotional effects depends much upon the mystery of those impulses that are never realized in actions; and so the range of Dickens is the greatest in the English novel by reason of the apparently limitless potentialities of the man. But a writer with meagre store of potential traits is limited in the varieties of self-portraiture, and if he does not supplement his introspective quarryings with much observation, he repeats himself in characters and crises.

Pugh unfortunately offers but a narrow range of potential traits. The varieties of Pugh's self-portraiture represent only two ages: childhood, and early manhood. The portraits of the first class vary in the years of childhood described, in the circumstances of home life, and in the proportions of truth and idealization. The portraits of youth and maturity differ in their apparent purpose; one may be truthful autobiography in fact, another a deliberate isolating of some destructive impulse, another an imaginative, less factually and more psychologically truthful portrait.

I

Portraits of Childhood and Youth

The idealized portraits of the child are Tony Drum *(Tony Drum),* Punch Farr *(Punch and Judy),* and Deuce Marketer *(The Spoilers),* and the process of idealization is the same one fundamentally as that employed in *Oliver Twist:* the boy becomes a saintlike figure by contrast with his environment. Tony Drum, a slum child and a hunchback, is created in a spirit of pathetic fancy. Punch Farr is a quixotic righter of wrongs and evangel of happiness. Deuce is idealized by being given a brutal thief as father. But the three are at heart very like, as they are very like Tobias Morgan, and like the boys who grow up or have grown up to youth and manhood in other novels. Pugh in one instance does even as Dickens did, imagines a variant of his fictional boy as a girl, and that in the portrait of Cambria Ormathwaite *(The Stumbling Block).*

Two novels deal only with the childhood of their hero, *Tony Drum* and *The Eyes of a Child;* in two novels the child is a less important character, *The Spoilers* and *Punch and Judy;* in one novel the youth is drawn from the eighth to the eighteenth year clearly, and then again in one episode at twenty-one,—*The Secret Years.* In *The Heritage* childhood is lightly sketched in to introduce the situation that forms the motive of the book. Reminiscences of childhood form the richest parts of *The Fruit of the Vine. Empty Vessels* gives only general clues to the hero's upbringing.

The little hunchback of the slums, Tony Drum, is a gentle, sensitive boy, musical, and possessing, too, a precocious gift for story-telling. That gift serves as a liberator of an exceedingly proud spirit. To open-eyed fellows resting from the play in which he cannot join them, he describes the strong and handsome boy he was in heaven, a leader in games, and winner every time in every kind of competition. He had been no "humpy" in heaven, and would still be there, "but you have to be born sooner or later—worse luck!" He has courage too: spat upon, pelted, and cuffed by the strong and the agile, he never whimpers; he is almost formidable as he grits his teeth, defying his attackers. He feels the pulsing of curiosity about woman, but the shyness that his crippled figure has burned into him has barred him from early knowledge. A something in him, more than his pathetic deformity, a gentleness, subtly invites the love of a girl who is ashamed, despite the earnestness of her affection, of having a cripple as sweetheart.

He is a self-centered, self-searching child. After his mother is killed, no tears rush into his eyes; there is no cataclysm of grief within his heart, no leaping of the mind to thoughts of heaven and reunion; and Tony is ashamed that he is not overcome. He does not find expression for softer feelings until words of pity are spoken to him by a friendly woman, then tender thoughts come, but only by way of self-thought.

He reaches out for wisdom, and is wise as only a child can be that has learned to trust in dreams. He is disappointed in grown-ups; they are all frauds, pretending to know, and shedding round their patronizing airs. "I suppose as you grow up you change and become silly," he writes to his sister, in a sententious mood. Ambitiously he dreams of some day imparting to others knowledge still unlearned. But the handicaps are too great, and the child that might have been a famous poet or novelist or faithful teacher becomes a victim of ignorance and poverty. In *Tony Drum* the might-have-been of life is gloomily realized; the what-really-happened to Pugh is made what-might-have-been.

Punch Farr, aged eight, is even externally not very different from Tony Drum. His outrageously large nose, that inspired his nick-name, is his deformity. He too is frail and thin and oldish

looking, and he has a talent for story-telling and an imagination that finds in life raw material for romance. He has insight into his inclination toward fantasy, but his awareness of it is no bar to full enjoyment. With the gift for romance goes also that of curiosity in people. His curiosity has made him wise, but an ideal strain in him that was not present in Tony, urges him to believe that human errors can be rectified. He naively tries to right the wrong that has been done the child of the Crosses—its being given life—by stabbing it. His interest in people and his romantic imagination combine with a quixotic benevolence to produce as delightfully impossible a bit of romantic intrigue as Kenneth Grahame ever imagined, by which he breaks the spell of shyness that separates two middle-aged dreamers, Miss Micmack and Mr. Bedggood. His heart is sincerely touched by the poverty of his fellow-romancer, Mme. Carlotta, and for her sake he communicates with the gentleman whom she had pointed out to Punch as her late husband's villainous rival. He would have made a married couple of Holy Jo and Mme. Carlotta if the restaurant drudge, Niddy, had not frustrated him by capturing Holy Jo for herself in a single-handed sortie. The result of his benevolent mission on Mme. Carlotta's behalf is the discovery of his bachelor-father, Sir Paston Woolveridge, and his adoption into a care-free life.

Deuce Marketer, step-child of Lambeth, son of a brutal thief, is another idealized version of the Cockney boy. He is described as owning a lively imagination, but few opportunities are granted him to display it. He is as naive, innocent, untainted by his vile surroundings and haphazard street-life as an Oliver Twist. He has the charm of an Oliver Twist, or a Punch Farr, an intensely loving temperament, that is entirely overlooked by his domineering father but understood by his guardian in Marketer's absence, the preacher Cowcross. He has the loving nature, and also the pride of his near-counterparts. He is wise too in the lore gathered from his father's craft. An adoption by folk with means is the fantastic gesture by which he is lifted to the higher plane on which he really belongs. It is a substitute for the device of the well-born waif of the streets who is discovered by his family, revived in *Punch and Judy* from *Oliver Twist*.

The portrait of Tobias Morgan *(The Eyes of a Child, The Secret Years)* is the fullest of all the boys' portraits, covering one volume and part of a second. The mood in which it is created is less idealistic than that of any of the child portraits so far viewed; the background of home life, more elaborately drawn, is humble but not sordid. The handicaps toward eventual escape are lighter, and the way of emancipation true to life. The basic nature of the boy is combined of the familiar traits, expanded by illustration and analysis.

Tobias is a sensitive brooding child, held sturdy by a strong will. He is interested in people and curious of life in the large; his constantly creative imagination first evolves answers to such questions about people he is afraid to ask of the older mocking folk. He has insight, which is spurred on by a distrustful and self-critical disposition. His imagination does not find enough to do in answering questions about real people, but overruns into madcap romancings modelled after the cheap novelettes that are food for him, as for Punch Farr and others in the little gallery. Insight into self and recognition of his trait of improving dull fact with lively fiction is shared by Tobias with all the rest, but is elaborated with a sense of shame and the modifying thought that only cleverness makes it possible. He feels superior to the convention that truth is good and falsehood bad: he thinks truth dry and stupid, but make-believe enthralling.

His habit of reflection makes him wise: even by his eighth year he knows that goodness is not bound up with obedience to religious convention; his uncle's character teaches him that a man may draw sweetness, understanding, and love out of the treasure-house of his own personality. He has a tender loving nature that is thwarted by an ignorant mother who cannot understand the queer precocious child. His insight reveals to him as to Tony Drum, how pathetically futile are his elders who go through the ritual of teaching him, and urges him to rely upon himself. His sensitiveness makes him very unhappy as the knowledge of sexual life is thrust upon him by his scurrilous mates at school. But the idealist in him clings to the knowledge of love at its best as he dreamed and read of it.

Tobias will reach the higher, gentler, tolerant life through his talent and passion for scribbling.

The Secret Years is largely a record of increasing wisdom. The distrust that came early into the character of Tobias grows in adolescence and is never greater than when he is applauded. He associates effort with the worthwhileness of a thing, and despises such abilities of his own as produce effects easily. The self-centeredness of a Tony Drum is proved in a crisis similar to that which revealed it to Tony,—it is the death of Tobias's father. He is ashamed that no tempest of grief is roused in him, and thinks he must be heartless, though he vigorously asserts to himself, "I did love you, Dad, didn't I?" The fear of seeming unmoved at the funeral makes him so ill that he is unable to attend.

He firmly holds to ideals of industry and honesty, and a belief in a love that shall be a perfect answer to the calls of mind and body; and his ideals are never disturbed by the un-ideal environments of a metal-works and of law-offices. It is late in his teens when his introspective mind discloses his dualism, the parallels of better and baser natures within, and his tendency to act in a way opposite to the pre-conceived path. That discovery still does not upset his idealism; he determines to rely wholly upon the impulses of his heart for counsel.

The novels dealing with the maturer years of the Cockney hero describe the period of childhood on a varying scale, from the merest hints in *The Shuttlecock* to the detailed episodes in *The Fruit of the Vine*. Enough is told of the childhood of the dipsomaniac, Mark Gillies, to endow him with the fighting instincts of a Tobias Morgan, his confidence and his ambition to rise to a fitter social plane out of a poor and irritating environment, a capacity for a fine tenderness, and an unshakeable idealistic faith in womankind. But all the qualities with which his brothers in character manage to succeed are nullified by his inherited craving for alcohol.

Gideon Bolsover *(The Fruit of the Vine)* was a weak, ailing child, sensitive, quick to cry. He had a talent for song, as did Tony Drum also, and, like Tobias Morgan, he spent much time backstage in the theatre where his father was employed in every miscellaneous capacity. He was so self-centered that he could no

more grieve at his father's death than could Tobias. He was timid at heart and courageous in act, intelligent, strong-willed, a hard and willing worker at school and in his employment. He too was born a romancer, spinning dreams within his mind for the delectation of an invisible audience who understood him and applauded. He was severely pinched by poverty. All the bestial features of life were taught him before he was eight, and yet he idealized girls, worshipping them humbly, and was disliked by them. Like Tobias he began before he reached his teens to express in writing the passionate dream-stuff that dizzied his brain. He was very young when he realized that he was superior to the plane on which he had been born, but his sense of fitness was dashed by his meeting a youth who had that savoir faire which he knew intuitively to be the shibboleth of breeding, and whom he began to imitate, even as Peter Vandy and Harry Weaver, struggling to put on finer manners, were to meet other exemplars of the gentleman born.

Peter Vandy *(Peter Vandy)* belongs to the portraits intended to show a figure in whom the ruinous impulses are uncurbed by any tenderness or humane self-guidance. A Somers Town waif, remembering only a slack and feeble mother whose greatest talent was for tearful begging, he was adopted by a widower of Kentish Town. As a boy he was aggressive, but in a mean, hurtful way. Instead of fighting bullies, he fought to bully. He was keenly ambitious to rise, not to live a happier life, but to dominate others. The talent with which he won power was an acute passion, exercised early, for bargaining profitably.

Harry Weaver's portrait *(Harry the Cockney)* as a boy is that of Tobias Morgan and Gideon Bolsover, with only the talent for writing deleted and the financial circumstances made more comfortable. He was born in Marylebone, and went through the same schooling experience in the very same schools. He was shy, somewhat effeminate, but indistinguishable for cowardice and snobbishness among the ruck of school boys. He was an incorrigible idealist, naively interpreting many facts of observation as being what they pretended to be. He was blessed with an imagination that was always engaged in active reverie, turning the crude materials of life observed into delightful fancies. It was never at a

loss to supply a superlative setting for his own heroic self. If he suffered pain, he was a Christian martyr, enduring all the horrible tortures of the arena, with lips curled in a sneering smile. If he suffered from hunger, it was because London was undergoing a siege. Shy, conciliatory, and lacking pluck, though tall and strong, he learned from an example of surprising courage in a half-wit boy, that to win one must feign courage. That lesson served also to make him liked by women, for Harry Weaver is the favorite Tobias and Gideon were not. Throughout his years of late adolescence, spent flirting on the various Monkey Parades, and playing the eternal game of being a someone much better than he was, Harry shuddered in moments when he looked into himself and saw what poor stuff he was at heart. Vaguely he yearned for the real something better he was ignorantly affecting, and he believed that if only he could have the chance he could do and think finely and worthily. The final impetus to his ambition came as a rebound from an hour of boastful talk in which he had retailed to his uncle a saga of wholly fictional adventures in debauchery. When he was alone again, he experienced the most desolating disgust with himself that started him on his upward journey.

The childhood of those protagonists whose dramas are lived in the years of their maturity only is referred to in occasional "throwbacks." John Coldershaw *(The Man of Straw)* was brought up in an atmosphere of religious quietism and ignorance. David Pallister *(The Shuttlecock)* boasted that he had been a poor guttersnipe. His egotism, and continuous need for romance, and his headlong rushes into it bespeak an emotional nature, and his wit and artistry a precocious imagination and talent for story-telling. In the playwright, Oliver Creed *(The Enchantress)*, the idealistic strain of the hero has been made prominent and the selfish traits have been obscured. His naive worship of the dancer, Lydia Mersey, is a strong enough clue to a sensitive, dreaming child. And Ferdinand Smallpiece *(The Broken Honeymoon)*, who was to be entangled with an inferior woman, must also have been a spinner of make-believe. Though his early years brought him in touch with theatrical people, as did the childhood of Bolsover and Morgan, their influence was coarsening rather than merrily humane.

Crispin Pix *(Punch and Judy)*, deliberately secluding and starving himself in Soho for the sake of a freer art, combines the idealistic and passionate strains. Only one who had long been used to the habit of holding to his dreams with a stubborn disregard for circumstance could have held out until starvation paralyzed him; while his quick infatuation with Una Vani, in the face of his long attachment with Felicia Dole,—his social equal, understanding friend and maternal lover,—betrays the emotionally mercurial child already drawn as a man in David Pallister. The dominant strain of Roger Corrillian *(The Quick and the Dead)* is that of the shy and sensitive idealist, a natural solitary. The imaginative and cultural sides of him are entirely blotted out. His need for self-reliance in forcing his lone way upward in an unsympathetic world hardened his will.

Benjamin Roost's early years *(Empty Vessels)* were like those of Tobias Morgan. He had learned to read and write as if instinctively, and often had been called upon to recite swiftly memorized verses to a company gathered by his father. To him there had early come the sense of being not only greater than his surroundings, but entirely out of harmony and irreconcilable with them. He had been loved by his father, who died when Benjamin was a small boy, and been hated by his mother, and subjected to all the repressing tortures she could invent to thwart him. But he had been educated, because his father's will made him the sole heir. His ambition was to be recognized as the gentleman he felt himself—not exactly to be, but to be like, and his writing was to be the ladder to the coveted height.

II

Portraits in Manhood

The novels make one think that Pugh found life beyond the years of childhood and youth a relatively fatuous and episodic affair; the later period has given him very little to write about. Consider the continuous lyrical glow of the first half of *The Fruit of the Vine*, and how labored and helter-skelter is so much of what follows. In a better proportioned book, *Harry the Cockney*,

that traces nearly the same routine of life of a similar hero, the years between twenty-one and forty-one are elided. The life of the young writer Tobias Morgan does not in two volumes proceed beyond his majority, when his first book was published; nor do we learn anything more of the novelist Benjamin Roost than what happened in the months before and after the publication of his first book at twenty-one. *The Shuttlecock* gives you only a few days in the life of the author, David Pallister, who is already famous and popular at twenty-nine. One supposes that Oliver Creed, playwright, and Crispin Pix, composer, are in their late twenties when they undergo the period of despair that forms the time of their story. The single hysterical situation enfolding Roger Corrillian spans not more than two years between his courtship and his death in the late twenties. Smallpiece also is drawn only as he squirms in the grip of a situation spreading over several months: the episode can be assigned to a year not long after twenty. John Coldershaw and Mark Gillies are described in the decade ending in their thirties. The only novel in which Pugh tried to cover a life-span with greater stress upon maturity, *Peter Vandy,* is his one emphatic failure. The only convincing impressions of the novel are made by crises occurring in youth, and portrayed before and after in other books; all material that is exclusive with the book is flimsy fabrication.

1

The Debased Hero

Two portraits in our gallery agree in picturing a Cockney who is thoroughly base. The circumstances under which Coldershaw and Vandy grow into manhood are very different, and their traits and temperaments are unlike.

Coldershaw has been pampered by his parents, and supplied with the means for attending a university and for loafing at his pleasure afterwards. His sense of aloofness from his vulgar environment takes a destructive turn, unchecked by any ambition to rise in the social rank in which his self-assumed abilities might be valued. He indulges his craving for drink, for libertinism, for

money, for indolence, and is enabled to win satisfaction in all through a handsome appearance, a strong body, and perfect freedom from the burden of having to think for others. The face has no soft line anywhere, no suspicion of a sense of humor, or the trace of a tender thought felt even once: it is hard, frankly brutal, vicious. That Eve could love so loveless and inhuman a beast is a mystery that the Eves of the world, from the very first one down, will not disclose, though it has been guessed.

Is he believable, or is he a devil clothed as a man? We must admit first of all that he is a thoroughly imagined creature, and therefore artistically real. A possible motive for hesitating to accept him is that he is perhaps too logical a product of an ignorant, quietistic home and pampering parents. He turns out to be selfish, materialistic, unimaginative, brutal, and indolent, — of course. And one expects in a fiction a little surprise, some contrast to the logical consequences one readily foresees. The truth is that in his portrait of John Coldershaw, Pugh relies solely upon the logic of life, that may be on occasions as inexorable to the demand for surprise and contrast as the totaling of one and one; there is in the figure no quirk of imagination or fantasy that might produce a total of eleven.

Peter Vandy is a waif from his eighth year on, and is driven upward by a consistent craving for wealth and power that absorbs him entirely. He knows that he is selfish, but maintains his self-esteem by defying self-interest. ("There is no god but Self. And Self again. And again Self.") Ragamuffin, newsboy, student of bookkeeping and shorthand, newspaper genius, crafty flatterer and cool thief, he finally enters a crisis when he falls in love with Clara Fillery, a fellow-student at the evening school. But the invitation of his uncle to enter the firm, and contact with that arrived, well-poised personality, point his ambition toward social as well as commercial success. He jilts Clara, and marries his mean-featured, shrill voiced, charmless cousin. He dons the robes of tact and adroitness, becomes in time the head of the firm and increasingly arrogant. After two children have died, he firmly regulates his wife's regimen of living and breeds a third child, a boy, in whom he centers his justification for a grossly material existence. But his habit of self-interest costs him the life of his

son and his own sanity when, after denying further credit to a brilliant surgeon, he is faced by a serious illness of the boy, and frantically recalling the surgeon, finds him a suicide.

The traits that class him with our varying hero are, his self-centeredness, his feeling of discomfort over the humble plane of his life, and his intense ambition to mount above it. An essential move in his career, the uncle's adoption of him, identifies Vandy with Mark Gillies, as with Harry Weaver also, for all three owed their elevation to uncles who had already arrived. An important scene reminds us of the sensations of Gideon Bolsover when he met Haviland, of Harry Weaver when he met Warlock, of Corrillian when he met Taskover, and of Benjamin Roost observing Jubal Coopless. That scene shows Vandy, standing at the bedside of the dying Cosmo Rawtenstall, becoming aware that he has not been able to acquire the core of gentility by adopting its gestures. An unreasonable fury shakes him as he notices the grace and refinement of Cosmo's wife, the subtle and harmonious details of furnishing that obtain in the cultured home, and the cool, contemptuous smile of the dying man. In a sudden access of longing for the real thing beyond the pose, he begs Cosmo to teach him how to live. Cosmo's mocking, "It is too late," tears his momentarily exposed nerve and inflicts a pain that ends in Vandy's throwing off the fraudulent cloak he had studied to wear well, and his falling into open savagery. In the course of his hopeless abandonment of all self-restraint, he makes the decision not to extend further aid to the doctor who could have saved the life of his only son. Remorse over his instinctive hardness joins despair to push him over the precipice of sanity. An old and broken man, he can remember enough of the crisis that had begun the shattering of his reason to maunder the epithet Cosmo had applied to him, "The lonely fool, the lonely fool."

2

The Unfortunates

In Mark Gillies *(The Heritage)*, a grandson of a dipsomaniac, and son of a pathological dreamer, are envinced a number of traits

common to the emergent Cockney. He has strength, a good appearance, a clever head, a certain charm effluent from his power of tenderness, his assurance in his superiority, and his romantic idealism that glorifies womanhood without discrimination. The talent for letters is omitted, and an inherited craving for drink, aided by irresistible allures to its gratification, is substituted. There are hours when his tenderness warms toward his mother, who tries to show him his peril; but his blind idealistic worship of Eve the temptress and his inherited desire smother the sympathy that would have rewarded him with safety, if not happiness. Whether or not he slides all the way to destruction becomes, by the shaping of the story, an indifferent matter to us: we feel at last only the mother's poignant loneliness and her pain and despair at being unable to help her son.

Gideon Bolsover's portrait is enriched with the traits of insight, an active imagination, and a talent for letters. He belongs to the shyer phase of the Cockney hero. He has the typical conviction of his superiority, but not the bluffness to assert it. He is romantic and passionate, but only in reverie does he overwhelm women with his wooing. He knows the acuteness of his wit, and yet his reserve allows him to exercise it in brilliant badinage only to himself. His first book brings to him the adulation of lion-adoring women, but also emphasizes the gulf between his humble ignorant home and the society to which his genius has raised him. As his career advances, he loses his head over the married sister of his friend Haviland. Mims is a cool, tantalizing, selfishly unyielding woman. And she ridicules him for being deferential, idealizing, gentle. But when, in a deliberate intoxication, he tries strength, he is directly unmanned by Mim's appeal to the memory of her dead brother, Bolsover's adored friend.

From the time of the repulsion Bolsover degenerates rapidly. He works hard during the day at his writing, but the nights are consumed in debauchery. He picks up a factory girl whose wistful face appeals to him, and is separated from her when he is beaten by her suitor. Tired of life, he would end it by poison; he becomes ill instead. All that is left him after his recovery is an unquenchable craving for drink. He does every mean job willingly for the drinking money it would yield him; he pawns

everything he owns and steals, too, for drink. He spends months in a hospital with rheumatic fever, and when the siege has been broken returns to his family, a physical and mental wreck, his talent so crippled that he can barely grind out sensational stuff for the newspapers, much less anything worth while. Yet there is hope for the man, if the torrents of lyricism in which he recalls his childhood days are a clue to the vigor his imagination has retained. His amanuensis portrays him as a little man, five feet three and a half, active, agile, strong, with wonderful eyes, restless features. The story, however, is incomplete. It gives us no hint of such absolute essentials as the way of Bolsover's literary success, the stuff of his novels, or of the psychic rewards his emergence from ignorant Cockneydom paid him, before he threw away his self-respect for an empty infatuation.

3

The Successful

While Pallister and Roost may have blemishes no true hero should own, theirs may be sympathetically regarded as the weaknesses of strength. Bolsover achieved as great success as any figure in our gallery, but his triumphs are blotted over with the ugly stains of degeneracy. In addition to Bolsover, three of the successful Cockneys are novelists, Pallister, Morgan, and Roost; and two more ply other arts, Creed playwriting, and Pix musical composition. Weaver, however, becomes a K. C., and Corrillian has already won a reputation as a clever construction engineer before he rushes into the romance that is to take his life.

The trait of the Cockney hero that is lifted from the aggregate to serve as the dominating impulse of Pallister, the shuttlecock, is his passion for romance. With this are combined the usual traits of charm, a childish need for a woman's flattery and mothering, a sobering insight into his own nature, cowardice in fearing to throw his whole heart into a game of love, and, not least, an undeviating self-interest. In David Pallister, Pugh has drawn an authentic and universal portrait of the literary artist, the plaything of his restless search for love, who is spurred on by an

imagination that paints its desires so vividly as to make the craving unbearable and that adds to its stimulation by interpreting all it sees and hears in terms of a possible avenue of romance. He craves to burn in a fever of happy agitation. It is in the intervals between his philandering that he yearns to be mothered by a woman who can give him all her love and all her thoughts, and who, after nursing his self-esteem with her sacrifice, will send him forth strong and confident on his roving for a new romance. He is roused by the first approaches of a comely woman to the point of infatuation; but when he makes love he says, "Do you love me?" instead of "I love you." Three women attract Pallister. Each animates his desire for romantic adventure and his passion for uttering ardent frenzies, but none lays a hand upon the elusive heart of the man. As eager as he is to have each love him, yet he is relieved when any gives up her claim: as important as romance is the need for remaining unbound, free to be tossed about like a shuttlecock in the game of passion.

The result of his insight into his own instability Pallister rationalizes with the cynical belief that love is not a universal passion, and the faculty of love is possessed by few men and fewer women. But he does not take his character compacently for granted; he berates himself for acting on impulse in all the pregnant affairs of life. He suspects, also, that the flattering words of a woman to the man she loves are not a true reading of his character but the beautiful product of her fervidly creative imagination.

If the whole of *The Shuttlecock* is a drama of a single situation occurring in the life of its novelist hero, it is not strange that only one situation in *The Secret Years* is drawn after Tobias Morgan has passed his majority; and that deals with his first love for a woman of the upper plane. He is bewitched by the aura of loveliness and intellectual strength radiating from Araminta Fearon even before he realizes his subjection. When, in the lonely darkness of his chamber, the independent will in him awakens and shouts a warning, the strongest argument it offers for the severance of the charm is the danger that Morgan has met his intellectual superior, or, at least, a woman with an individual mind. That fear gnaws at Morgan's self-esteem, and nearly devours his courage. But the passion of the man, and his keen

desire to win a woman of the upper class, beautiful and brilliant as well, overcome his fear. The last hangovers of his dread of being overshadowed by Araminta's cleverer mind and balked by her will are brushed away when she accurately reads his anxiety, his shock at having met for the first time in his life a woman of strong mentality and no reserves of shyness; and she calms and reassures him as a mother would her frightened child. He looks forward to a happy future that is somehow to take body from misty dreams.

The picture of Benjamin Roost is a union of the two main types of hero that Pugh draws, the successful emergent Cockney and the debased hero. The identity of Roost with Morgan is practically confessed by the common name of endearment the women of the higher class apply to both,—"Pan," and by the nickname of the hero's friend,—"Taters." The staple qualities of temperament and character owned by the emergent Cockney you will find again in Roost. He has personal charm, an independent will, self-confidence, an introspective and secretive disposition, shyness toward the socially important, pride, self-interest, a feeling of strangeness in his home and contemptuous superiority to it, an imperative passionateness, and the resolve to win a place in an atmosphere of tolerance and gentility and culture. The trait of Benjamin Roost that allies him with the debased Cockney is the negative one of lacking a gentleman's code of chivalry. Because the fiancée of a humble acquaintance of his dares to chide his arrogance with sarcasm, Roost determines on making a conquest of her in reparation. He calls upon every conscious item of his charm to secure his end. He separates her from Sidney, and overwhelms her with his play-acting. His only moment of genuine feeling occurs when he imagines Sidney alone grieving Beryl's desertion. Then tears gather in his eyes; but they are the product of his artistic powers, not of sincere emotion.

The woman of the upper plane whom he loves is Felicity Coopless. His desire for her is softened by none of the trepidations with which Tobias Morgan dreamed of Araminta Feardon. It is a rather hard, determined coveting that impels Roost, and though he has a deal of charm, and though he inspire in the girl rapture of idolatry, he cannot give the last persuasive touch that

would make her his, impervious to every other influence in life but that which he exerted. The cause of his defeat is not specified in so many words. The last scene provides the suggestion that the reason for his failure lay in the man himself. For all his striving after a finer way of life, for all his brilliant talents and charm of address, he lacked what Felicity must find in her mate, the consciously unacquirable impulse of kindness and thought for others that is a part of the gentleman born. Felicity's rejection of him might have been worded as bluntly as Morgan's dismissal of Fanny Cashions: "You don't suit."

The playwright Oliver Creed *(The Enchantress)* is a lonely dreamer and failure when we meet him. Beneath his role we recognize our actor by his struggle with poverty, his sensitiveness, avid curiosity in the human parade, and an innocent idealism. Thus he is kin rather with Morgan and Corrillian than with Roost and Pallister. The one scene in which he plays a part draws him as a puritan exalting Lydia Mersey for her imagined virtue. Creed's idealistic, or perhaps only instinctive, moral tolerance causes Lydia to give up thoughts of him and to marry an old usurer, Sir Moses Parradyne. The death of Sir Moses and Creed's later success enable Lydia and the man she loved to meet again. This time his experience of life has made such a change in his outlook that he renews his interest without allusions to purity or marriages of barter.

The composer, Crispin Pix *(Punch and Judy)*, is starving at twenty-four, and the victim of horrible depressions after hours of emotional strain at his music. He has the familiar vein of romantic idealism; but the idealism of Pix that leads him to worship a woman of coarse fiber is qualified and outweighed by a snobbishness originating in the background unfamiliar to our typical Cockney hero of a cultured family and an Oxford education. The impulses of Pix vary between the blind idealistic worship of a Bolsover and the unstable, selfish, headlong passion of a Pallister, without his delicate taste. These two tendencies are balanced for a short time on the pin-point of family pride. The climax to the situation is an acute disappointment over the ephemeralness of what was to be a grand passion.

Crispin falls in love with the breath-taking beauty of the

Cockney model, Una Vani. He is as horrified as Creed would have been to learn how she had nearly been the victim of a roué, and is jealous of the man whose name she pronounces so familiarly. But at the same time he is embarrassed by the roughness of her diction, and her lack of polish. His friend, the novelist Dole, is entirely unsympathetic with him over the affair, and laments that "it is always the best boys that get entangled." Dole reads him well, and warns him that he is a romantic who will never be perfectly satisfied with anything that is his; but that he is also a realist, and unable to beguile himself for long. Dole tries to convince him it is a mistake for a man to marry out of his class; that the woman endures real hardship fitting herself to her new sphere; she becomes another than the woman loved. Because he is a snob, Crispin agrees to Una's request that she be allowed to stay with his sister, the very tactful woman of county society, and under her tutelage learn to become worthy of him. Una's rebellion against the hypocritical rites of monied society affords as much relief to Pix as Arab's decision to marry her father's partner had brought Pallister. He is off with the old, and ready to be on with the new; and then, also, Una had never really conformed to the ideal of his class. He suffers some pain from the separation. Losing her hurts. He is racked by the fear that he is unchangeably selfish. He is miserable because he thinks he cannot ever enjoy the perfect love the poets and he had dreamed of. That disillusionment impresses him with the conviction that he has lost his youth. In a very world-weary spirit he accepts the maternal soothing woman of his own class who loves him unselfishly.

Harry Weaver *(Harry the Cockney)* is drawn at the end of his middle years, when he has become King's Counsel and member of Parliament. It is hard to believe him the same person who as a boy had been discontented with the blind and futile life of the lower middle class, and after becoming aware of his intellectual and cultural shame had accepted his uncle's help toward study. The mood in which he is caught is a meditative one; his great expectations of the joy that would be his as an honored member of the ruling class have proved chimeras. He is a lonely man, a pariah from the class into which he was born and an alien to his wife and children. He had believed the transit to a higher plane

only a matter of physical motion; but now that he has arrived, he understands it is a matter of spiritual metamorphosis, involving too many factors of early habits and tendencies ever to be perfect. He blames a certain poverty of mind and soul, inherited from his mother, with being the barrier between his familiars and himself. It is a yearning for his kind again, though that kind might be in body repellent now, that inspires the sobbing, "Ah, God! . . . how lonely I am!" No more of him is given as a man than is revealed in that moment.

The other successful Cockney, Roger Corrillian, is an engineer specializing in harbor construction. His character is founded roughly on the idealistic pattern. In his twenties he had had an attachment for a factory girl whom he wanted to marry, unfit wife though she would have been. The girl had obeyed her instinctive fear of the unequal union, and refused to marry him, and then, irked by his incessant urging, had run away. The idealism of Corrillian with reference to women would have brought him to an earlier unhappiness than it did if Mollie had been weaker and selfish. That idealism has produced in his mind an attitude of deliberately rejecting all evidence or opinion that would hold women culpable of moral lapses or of intriguing the affections of men. In the early days of his residence in the Pattenden home he gains glimpses of the volatileness of Jenifer, but his insistence on her perfection obliterates them as rapidly as a true believer's faith disperses doubt.

The qualities that chiefly make Corrillian known as the recurring hero are his passionateness, and his susceptibility to the agonies it may entail, through violent revulsion and rebellion against the tyranny of sex. There are also his uneasiness with folk of cultural ways, his shyness of speech, strong will-power and independence, his lonely brooding disposition, self-centeredness, and proneness to melancholy. But the fundamental portrait has been changed. The powers of acute self-reading and comprehension of the motives of others found in Bolsover, Morgan, Weaver and Roost, are missing. Instead, you find an honest straightforwardness of speech and conduct, modified by no calculations of effect, and flexible under the forces of social pretence only at the cost of nervous strain. Another trait unknown to the other Cockney

protagonists, and used only once before in a main character—in the shadowy Saxon Basterfield,—is a form of self-centeredness that makes Corrillian give conscious priority to the business of his life over every other concern, even that of his wooing. It is that imaginative blindness that makes his employer call him names when he finds Corrillian working steadily in the office during the last few days before the wedding. Had he had the insight of Harry Weaver, or even a normal curiosity to learn what his handicap to social happiness might be, he would have discovered two stigmas of lower birth: his blindness of imagination, and his moral intolerance. His bigoted treatment of the pagan Taskover's books and memory is to Jenifer, the free-born pagan, a horrible and unpardonable fault. Lacking literary taste and the awareness of how short a popular whim may last, and how sandy its foundations may be, Corrillian falls back upon its ethical shortcomings to find fault in Taskover's art and so to justify his death. He is shocked to see Jenifer worshipping the book and the memory of the genius he had murdered. He is sure the man was insincere; his work, so far as he can judge, seems pretentious, putrescent. His perplexity at the thought that by killing Taskover he had enabled Jenifer to deify him, drives Corrillian farther down the dark road to insanity. To talk of Taskover becomes a self-punishing obsession for him. And Jenifer, gathering hysteria in her antagonism to a husband who cannot appreciate a self-evident genius, helps to drive him farther.

The hysterical momentum of the whole book makes us forget that Corrillian can be the man who was thrilled because a factory girl declared that he was so thoughtful and kind he must be a gentleman. That incident is, however, to be remembered as a clue to the fundamental portrait from which Pugh departed to paint his brilliant Cockney as engineer.

The outstanding successful aspirants to the halo of gentility are alike in more than sharing a majority of similar traits, and that is in their ideas on the value of their reward. Peter Vandy, financier, realizes in the end that in winning his way to the highest plane he had ignored learning to live on it. Pathetic is his pleading to Cosmo Rawtenstall, and tragic the disintegration of the man after he feels it is too late to learn. Harry Weaver, King's

Counsel, and a distinguished success as member of Parliament, understands that the breadth of mind and feeling which he must have to live in his new environment is not in him. From Corrillian, who had been delighted to be called a gentleman, insight is withheld by a deliberate forcing of characterization; but he must have wished for a cultivated taste that he might know authentically if Taskover was really the genius Jenifer hysterically held him to be. What Roost's opinion was can easily be imagined. It has been such an all-important consideration to him to be recognized as a gentleman. And then the girl of the upper plane jilts him, partly because she hears a call to the greater field, social service, but in part also, and perhaps in the decisive part, because Roost is not of the manner born. The scene that suggests with devastating power what Roost must have felt is the last. He is drunk, and is enthusiastic over his fine resolve to marry Beryl or pay Sidney an annuity for marrying her. Into a public-house he marches, and sees, sitting at a table, Sidney, facing him, and a woman. As he stands over the woman, he asks Sidney, "Who is the lady?" And then Beryl, pale, and eyes bright, stands up, and looking alternately at her husband and at the now famous author, corrects him calmly, "No, I think it ought to be—who's the gentleman?"

We are reminded by Corrillian's tenseness of feeling, frenzied passionateness and jealousy, and shuttlings from despair over the struggle to throw off the tyranny of desire, to a renewed faith in Jenifer, of the unhappy Ferdinand Smallpiece *(The Broken Honeymoon),* who is drawn in the dilemma of first passion. Corrillian, in his short-lived episode with a factory girl, had been shaken in his illusion of loving a tractable woman. When Jenifer joins Yallop and Padghorn in challenging his literary fitness for the editing of Taskover's work, Corrillian is again shocked, but his passion for the woman holds him chained. It is nearly so with Smallpiece, the clerk who aspires to a literary career, and who is equipped for his art with an excitable, imaginative temperament and a yearning for romance. He is of the variety of Cockney hero who is introspective, sensitive, idealistic, passionate, but not physically attractive. For the sake of living in the same house with the beautiful school-teacher,—a woman parallel in type with

him in being contemptuous of her slovenly kept, cultureless home, —Smallpiece endures many discomforts, from neglect to petty thievery, and he himself is practically stolen by Rosetta Conover.

On the evening when she answers her mother's rebuke for lateness by turning back into the street, Smallpiece gallantly follows her to Hampstead Heath, and sits out the night keeping guard while she sleeps. When morning comes, and Rosetta crudely hints at the compromising situation, Smallpiece meekly proposes marriage. Their relations are a source of nerve-consuming horror to Smallpiece: all his attempted exposition of the ideal marriage, as he had dreamed it possible, Rosetta harshly suppresses. She wants to hear nothing about how life may be a continuous striving after refinement: she is too jealous of his already superior fineness to encourage him in any action that will only expose her inability to follow him. She tortures him by showing fondness for a vulgar acquaintance out of the past, and once gives him in a rude dismissal the opportunity to be rid of her. But the innocent man clings to the vulgar shrew, and suffers her sarcasm. His gentle appeal in answer to her insult is rewarded with derision of his effeminacy, and boastful insinuations of her past. Like Corrillian, he swings from hateful repulsion to a love that rests precariously upon the illusion that the beloved is in love with him.

The day before his wedding he is chagrined to feel no thrill of passion. He does not realize that his mind is battling passion to sustain its independence. The honeymoon brings even more painful disillusionment. Dreamer and romancer, he is yet a keen and dispassionate observer; but what he sees only frets his too delicate nerves.

The disparity in temperament results very early in the honeymoon in scenes that are dominated by that master of sarcasm, Rosetta. She drives Frederick nearly to suicide, and herself elopes with Wrathall when Frederick does not return from a walk. Even then he blames himself for Rosetta's action. Like Corrillian, he has a negative faculty of shutting his eyes to a woman's faults, and of believing her fine; of thinking that whatever she may do to harm herself or him, must be his fault. And so he blames himself for being obsessed by self-love, for failing to make allowance for her lack of breeding. He even imagines

he must have been a conceited, carping, posturing bore, and especially arrogant for being that without having any strength, or beauty, or grace to match with Rosetta's lovely, healthy body, her shrewdness of wit, and—his heart leaps at thought of its own illusion—her love for him. That illusion is the final and egotistic argument that holds him to Rosetta. On the occasions when his mind produces overwhelming evidence to show that Rosetta is unworthy, his heart, or is it his egotism, urges the counter argument that she loves him. Her elopment with Wrathall would have ended their relationship if the spinster Ella Candlish, admired by Ferdinand for an undisclosed reason, had not called him in to save him for her dear friend Rosetta. Good to hear is her assurance that Rosetta had realized her folly before giving herself to Wrathall, but less pleasant is her lecturing Ferdinand for his excessive imagination, his femininity, that explains why he had not mastered the rather mannish Rosetta, and his sharing with his wife the fault of asking too much and giving too little. And upon the promise of Rosetta's loving him very dearly, and the assurance that she has loved him all along without knowing it quite, Smallpiece agrees to return to her, expecting less, and with better prospect of dominating Rosetta through her error and his forgiveness of it.

Other lesser portraits also resemble the typical Cockney hero. Taskover, one of the evil geniuses in *The Quick and the Dead,* and mocker of the culturally untrained and unimaginative Corillian, resembles other figures as well as the Cockney hero. As one worshipped by the hero for his innate savior-faire, he resembles Haviland and Warlock; but in his easy philandering, even to winning the fiancée of his best friend, he is another Benjamin Roost, and his philosophy of life sounds as if it were spoken by David Pallister or Tobias Morgan.

Saxon Basterfield, who in *The Stumbling Block* is only a man to be passionately and selfishly loved by Bria Ormathwaite, is vaguely like Corrillian, in being without insight and imagination, and being drawn as one focussing his mind on material success; but he is also an altogether attractive and charming young man, susceptible to beauty and capable of strong passion. He undergoes a mental crisis something like that Smallpiece undergoes. His

idealistic dream about womanhood is broken, and he is left with the problem of summoning faith founded on knowledge to replace his dream-inspired worship. That situation is brought about by his wife's confessing that she had let her rival drown. Saxon recovers from the horror that had followed disbelief, proposes a philosophy of leaving all judgments to God, and is ready to forgive his wife. But she has already passed into the coma of childbirth, out of which she never wakes.

In portrait after portrait, then, Pugh drew essentially the same hero, and that was himself.

I

CONSTRUCTION AND STYLE

i

In the Large

Pugh failed more often than he succeeded in achieving good proportions to his novels. The best constructed novel, *The Shuttlecock,* deals intensively with one situation compressed into a few weeks of time and one setting, and revolving entirely round one figure, the shuttle-cock author. Nearly as well proportioned are *The Heritage, The Man of Straw, Mother-Sister, The Spoilers,* and *The Enchantress.* Ill assembled are the larger elements in *The Stumbling Block, The Broken Honeymoon, Punch and Judy,* and *Empty Vessels. Tony Drum,* the biography of a child, is a chain of episodes; *The Fruit of the Vine,* and *Harry the Cockney,* are hardly integrated sequences of episodes. *The Eyes of a Child* is an inartistic medley of propaganda and childhood reminiscence whose form is but slightly improved upon in its continuation *The Secret Years.* The most ambitious book, *The Quick and the Dead,* suffers from the bulkiness of, and redundancy within, its larger divisions.

It is puzzling that a writer with Pugh's admirable forte for the character sketch should have laid aside so frequently his talent for compression and directness when he was engaged in a novel. An artist with little to say may yet win fame by saying it sparsely, and an artist with so limited a revelation as Pugh has especial need of brevity.

That Pugh sometimes had the drama—rather than the theatre—in mind as he planned his work, perhaps learning the lesson from Hardy, is shown by the division of several of his books into dramatic movements, each ending in its own climax. If he could not gain compression by taking thought of classical drama, he could yet thereby gain certain effects in the large. *The Man of Straw,* for example, is measured into these stages of the drama of Eve's

disillusion and Coldershaw's descent: *The First Stage:* The Glorious Shadow; *The Second Stage:* The Sorry Substance; *The Third Stage:* Wedlock; *The Fourth Stage:* Madame Eva; *the Fifth Stage:* The Outcome. Cold and objective as is the text of the novel, these headings speak like a chorus in voicing a critical opinion as well as marking the progress of the plot. *The Heritage* is also conceived in the large as a drama, with its succession of motifs brought up to a climax: Book I, The Hero's Scene; Book II, A Mother Against Fate; Book III, The Length of the Measure. Again, the chorusing points our sympathies to the character who deserves them. The stages in the tragedy of *The Quick and the Dead* are likewise marked by divisions that resemble the acts of a play. You notice also the divisions into three acts, as it were, of *The World is my Oyster:* Part I, Seeking; Part II, And Finding; Part III, The Pearl. Story, sympathetic appraisal, and a hint of the delayed discovery of "the pearl" are packed into these headings.

The novels following the conventional pattern of closely integrated episodes, indivisible into larger movements and resolving into one climax, are *Mother-Sister* and *The Spoilers.* They seem to have lost the authentic tones of Pugh in gaining proportion. But perhaps the real reason for their strangeness is their complete impersonality and the absence in the stories they tell of that conflict between an aspiring soul and a depressing environment that usually sounds the sincerest note in the style of Pugh.

The biographical novels follow variations of the same general pattern; they re-create groups of episodes, presenting the childhood and youth of the hero. The extreme of the episodic method, done objectively, is found in *Tony Drum;* its perfection in the lyrical mood you find in those interviews in which Gideon Bolsover relives the joys and horrors and discoveries of childhood for the ears of his friend. The best ordered version of the story of an aspiring youth is *Harry the Cockney,* which carries his story up to the crisis of self-consciousness and the resolution to emerge. The last chapter is dated twenty years after, when the hero has won all he strove to win and is evaluating the gain. *The Eyes of a Child* retells autobiographically the familiar story of early childhood. The sprawling generalized descriptions of background, the episodic narrative, and the constant interpolations of tractate join

in rending apart the ghost of a frame. *The Secret Years,* carrying on the story from early adolescence, is more readable because it is more connected and more narrative; it ends with the publication of the hero's first book at twenty-one, and the beginning of an ardent love for a girl of the upper classes.

Autobiographical also, *The Broken Honeymoon* is an unevenly proportioned study of a conflict of temperaments; its deadly relentless quarrying into the mines of motive and emotion gives it a rough power.

Punch and Judy is a failure in construction, and its theme fails too. Interest is distributed among several groups of people who demand chief attention to themselves, and who obtain it between hurried leaps by the harassed author from group to group. There is a theme, the importance of illusion, but the episodes illustrating it are developed with an unequal lustre; and the main situation, favorite with the author, describing an artist entangled in an impracticable passion, crushes the theme with its irrelevance and even hostility. The very definiteness of the several groups glaringly shows up the lack of cohesion. The only biographical novel that ventures to distribute an even interest over the entire span of the hero's life, *Peter Vandy,* is successful in its proportions, but its compression squeezes all vitality out of it.

ii

The Chapter

For his mastery of chapter technique Pugh deserves especial tribute. The sketches and short stories nearly all have the nice form, the brevity that allows of the utmost emphasis upon a single impression, the beauty of natural yet absolutely pertinent dialogue, and the exactly right gesture of conclusion that artistic short fiction demands. The genius for hitting off single impressions emphatically you find transferred to the novels in many chapters that are prevented from becoming memorable by the slack ordering of the whole sequence.

A chapter is for Pugh a little drama in itself. Of course, not every chapter contributes an emphatic impression, but the chapters

that are muddled in their intention are very few, while the chapters that have an eminent point to make are done brilliantly to produce the utmost degree of effect. Some of his abundant rewriting consists in his transferring into a novel, bodily, or with slight changes, a dramatic incident already written as a short-story. Again, Pugh has taken a chapter out of a novel and reprinted it as a short-story, and a perfect one, independent of its relation to a larger scheme. It would be a mere task of enumeration to recall the many finely constructed chapter-scenes. One may skim hastily over the heights, and recall Ann Gillies leaving her son's house after she has nearly strangled her daughter-in-law. And combining the best art of the theatre with the subtly descriptive art of fiction is the wedding scene of Lydia and Sir Moses, that has the nephew, Jerry, entering the church from the sunny street, and gradually recognizing in the semi-gloom that his uncle's wife is none other than the bedraggled mistress who had left him before dawn, and who gazes steadily into his eyes as she passes him after the ceremony. And the last scene of *Empty Vessels,* brilliant in itself, though pulling the novel up to an end with a shock, has Beryl Parsnidge rising from her table in a common public house to expose, in a single retort, the futility of the gentleman novelist who had dropped her after his conquest.

The chapters in *The Fruit of the Vine* relating specific or generalized childhood memories are finely done: no dramatic effect is sought after, but only a stirring illusion of life. Remarkable is the skill with which Pugh kept each vignette alive and glowing by letting no word pass beyond the duration of the lyrical mood that inspired it. When the mood of intensive recollection has run its course, the vignette is done, and is remembered as a lyrical burst, a rhapsody in little. No measure of length dictates the size of the earlier chapters in the book. Such technique is especially suitable for the leisurely, plotless biographical novel, where periods of life may well be represented by episodes that command a revelation of the mental and emotional state of the hero and the conditions of his environment. But where the problem is to keep a large number of people alive and individual, though not isolated, the method of the brief scene developing a single lyrical mood is inapplicable. Pugh's expertise in the brief scene-chapter tempted

him, in *Punch and Judy,* to a sad failure. Having an unusually large scope to cover, he should have gone back for his model to the panoramic chapter of Dickens; instead he even accentuated the singleness of the effect and the brevity of his scenes, and produced a jungle of episodes, all interesting, but not integrated into a novel. It is not difficult to imagine the lack of continuity in a book in which two chapters hold seven scenes each, eight contain five scenes, four have four scenes, and four are divided into three scenes.

iii

Sequence

The novels of Pugh that are best as stories are those that are carefully planned, and proceed in an orderly progress: *The Man of Straw, The Heritage, Mother-Sister, The Spoilers,* and *The Shuttlecock.* Far be it from any reader with Conrad in mind to insist upon an orderly plan as essential to a novel, but it is true of Pugh that where there are noticeable departures from a proposed point of view or course of narrative, there follows the penalty of weakened interest. The story of Gideon Bolsover is interrupted too often by shuttlings from the time of an episode to the time of the recital; conclusions are anticipated, earlier episodes are recalled out of their scheme. While the shuttlings between story and narrator may have been designed to keep Bolsover's voice sounding in the reader's ear, the lyrical style and quotation marks do that adequately. Interest in *The Eyes of a Child* is hardly maintained without more effort than should be needed, because the book straddles between reminiscences over-elaborated, and tractate over-emphasized. *The Secret Years* rocks back and forth between story of childhood and youth and the author's interpolation of mature philosophy. But *Empty Vessels* is hardly weakened by its shuttling back at various points to childhood episodes, because the narrative vein is adhered to, and because the earlier incidents supply relevant motives for later events. The shuttling, however, is not smoothly performed.

iv

The Round-up Chapter

Rare as are the technical adaptations of Pugh from any other writer, he yet used the epilogic chapter hallowed by Dickens to round off four novels. Such a chapter one does not expect in a biographical novel, because in that there is no large group of characters who have had to retire to let major folk play their last grand scene, but in whom sufficient curiosity has been roused to make their ultimate fortune interesting to readers after suspense over the major folk has been allayed. A chapter like the last one in *Harry the Cockney,* that shows Harry Weaver very lonely with his honors, is not a true round-up chapter, for it discusses the fate of only one person, the hero, in his own revelation twenty years later. But the last chapters of *The Stumbling Block,* of *The Purple Head,* of *The Spoilers,* and of *The Shuttlecock* are true epilogues.

The epilogue that is structurally most like the older manner is that which ends *The Stumbling Block.* Here Pugh speaks a benediction, gently condoning the sins of the dead, calling the roll of the living, and assigning them their fates beyond the cover of the book. There is only a hint, but no more, of Pugh's feeling himself pressed by tradition to "say a few words" about what happens after. But in beginning "Chapter XXVII and Last" of *The Purple Head,* Pugh is very patently self-conscious of imitating Dickens, and in being that, he betrays his opinion that the round-up is not artistically good, whatever the precedent. Still he passes off his uneasiness very pleasantly. "Now this last chapter, rightly treated, should be an Epilogue. But the author has no love for such pomposities. And besides he wants you to read this last chapter."

Pugh departs in this novel from the traditional form of round-up chapter. Instead of the omniscient author, a character out of the book who has been a sympathetic observer "holds" the last scene; and the epilogue is more inclined to interpret the motives and natures of the various people than to allay curiosity over their futures. The retired detective Sprottle meets the author on a

Channel steamer, and there passes an entertaining judgment on the principals, in addition to describing the idyllic wedding of the lovers. The last chapter of *The Spoilers,* written in the next year, repeats the general device. It consists of an extract from the diary of the intelligent man of business, Sidney Gandy, that implies his marriage to Miss Porch, and tells of young Deuce Marketer's advancement in school. The next novel, *The Shuttlecock,* employs the device for the last time. In it a character is described conversing with the author, commenting upon people, and bringing the story up to date.

V

Point of View

Pugh's gift in prose is a lyrical kind, and that is why it came easier to him to write in the first person when he told the history of the emerging Cockney. The inclination to follow the easier way was both rewarded and punished, in different books. In *The Fruit of the Vine* it resulted in brilliant retellings of child-scenes in pure poetry. In *The Broken Honeymoon* it succeeds in producing a striking effect of blunt self-revelation. In *The Eyes of a Child* and *The Secret Years,* it encouraged Pugh to unload the whole burden of his philosophy and his fault-finding upon the fragile vehicle of the story of a child's mental growth. When Pugh resorted to the trick of removing himself by one person from the autobiographer, even proclaiming himself a kind of editor, and writing the preface to the autobiography, he succeeded in creating, as in *Harry the Cockney,* a well ordered book which, although attempting to be that formless thing, a biography, yet attains plot value. It is built around the motive of the hero's vague dissatisfaction as a child and youth, and his awakening to insight; thus a true psychological novel has been formed from the material of childhood memories. No such plot factor was tried out in *The Eyes of a Child,* because no psychic goal seems to have been reached by Tobias Morgan at the age of twelve, and none is aimed at in *The Secret Years,* despite the possibility for it.

In most of the objectively told stories of the Cockney, whether he is of the debased or of a more moral pattern, Pugh adopts the

point of view of the hero. We are led to share Coldershaw's aversion to his tastelessly furnished home, and tend to understand his mind and feelings and those of his mother better than we understand Eve. We sympathize with the impulsive, philandering David Pallister because Pugh himself does. In *The Stumbling Block,* we share the mind and point of view of Bria, who is the feminized version of the emancipated Cockney. We are induced to sympathize with Crispin Pix of *Punch and Judy* and we also feel that Una Vani is a heroine for rebelling against the restraint of the convention-bound leisured class. And so, although Roger Corrillian is a fool in the ways of love and marriage and literature, and Benjamin Roost is a vain and selfish striver for prestige, Pugh oriented all scenes and circumstances from the bias of these protagonists. In *The Heritage* a strict objectivity is obeyed, and yet Pugh makes us feel that Ann is not worthy of her son's respect, and is really the vulgar ignoramus, no matter how self-sacrificing her husband had suspected her to be. But wherever the drama is viewed from an outer perspective, as in the various headings to the stages of its progress, the absolute interpretation is heard. It is in the chorusings of these sub-titles that Coldershaw is named, "The Sorry Substance"; and although *Empty Vessels* is not conceived as a drama, its chapter headings disclose an absolute and critical interpretation which the text does not admit: "The Resplendant Youth," "Who's the Gentleman?"

In only one objectively rendered novel of the aspiring Cockney is the orientation not made from the mind of the protagonist, and that is in *Peter Vandy.* Its point of view is altogether baffling. The writer is hypothesized to be an acquaintance of the hero, and a man of sound common sense, who had trusted the hero even after his untrustworthiness had been demonstrated. Supposedly, he admires and pities the great man who fell of his own overreaching, yet at times he writes ironically, as if he were a twentieth century satirist of a modern Jonathan Wild. If, shrewd and sensible as he credits himself with being, he was ever spellbound by his subject, he could never have produced unwittingly the portrait of a completely heartless boy and man. Coolidge is no such simple, trusting man as W. Pett Ridge imagined writing the ironical novel *Splendid Brother.*

vi

Self-Plagiarism

Peter Vandy contains a pretty bold plagiarism from *Jonathan Wild.* Other borrowings can be found, from Dickens,[1] unacknowledged, and from Byron and Gray, acknowledged, in *A Book of Laughter,*[2] in which there are also pages of a clever imitation of the whimsical manner of *Tristram Shandy,* although the verbal niceties of style are not equalled.[3] But the most frequently plundered author whose work reappears in Pugh is Pugh himself. He wins the distinction of being the greatest plagiarist from his own work among the better novelists of our time. This self-plagiarism consists of 1) the narrative pattern of his biographical novels; 2) the early life and environment of the hero, where one situation developing in his later years forms the body of the novel; 3) the psychological motive of the talented Cockney ambitious to rise into the gentle class; 4) characters other than the hero, in *toto,* and in versions of a flexible formula; 5) episodes in the lives of other than the main characters; 6) scenic descriptions; 7) complete discourses on psychologic, social, or literary themes; 8) narrative passages; 9) sententious remarks; 10) similes.

1) Much biographical material in *The Fruit of the Vine, Harry the Cockney, The Eyes of a Child,* and *The Secret Years,* is reduplicated. The schooling of Tobias Morgan is that of Harry Weaver, on from that given by the two spinsters in a little room behind a sweet shop. From the time of their admission to the National School they parallel the adventures of Gideon Bolsover. In *The City of the World,* chapter VIII, as in *A Street in Suburbia,* chapter IV, you will find a description of the same National School in which these boys received their first public instruction. Bolsover and Morgan are hired at thirteen or so as assistants to a haberdasher, to call out wares placed on a stall. Both work next in a metal factory, from where they enter the office of a solicitor. These two, and, in addition, Weaver, Colder-shaw, Gillies, and Smallpiece are employed as solicitor's clerks. The personnel in the offices of Weaver and of Morgan is alike, and the experiences the two youths enjoy there are nearly parallel.

The adventures in romance of the Cockney heroes are also rewritten. Harry Weaver's innocent fascination by a purely animal type of girl is repeated in the torturous affair of Tobias Morgan. Coldershaw, Bolsover, Pallister, Corrillian, and Roost, have each a mistress randomly chosen out of the lower ranks, and at the same time they woo a woman of the coveted class. Pallister, Morgan, Roost, and Bolsover are novelists; Smallpiece has literary aspirations. Pix is a composer, and Creed a playwright. In their sensitiveness and introspection they are joined by the two Cockneys who succeed as solicitor and engineer, respectively, Weaver and Corrillian. The further duplications of character, or rather, recombinations of certain traits that form a repertory, as it were, of Cockney hero types, may be observed in the chapter on the Cockney hero, where other duplications have been noticed, inclusive of types 2 to 5.

6) The eloquent passage, first found in *The Fruit of the Vine,*[4] that paints the varieties of mood in which London shows itself to the Cockney wanderer, is reprinted in *Peter Vandy,* with the person changed grammatically to the third, and a word or so added for easier rhythm;[5] and in *The City of the World* you find it again, turned into the second person, to advise the reader how he may become an initiate into the secrets of living London.[6]

7) In *Punch and Judy* Bartholomew Dole discourses on the folly of arguing as to whether male or female is the superior sex, because of the blending of characteristics that makes an individual;[7] and in *Empty Vessels* Cora Merriam animatedly repeats the discourse to Roost, with a more biased application.[8] Dole's sneer at the world for regarding any man who has done something sensational to have proved himself able to comment worthily upon anything and to write books, and also his scheme for the revenge of writers upon intruders into their field you read in *Punch and Judy;*[9] you read it again in *A Book of Laughter,*[10] and once more of Hilary Jybe in *Empty Vessels.*[11]

In *The Shuttlecock* Pallister talks brilliantly on the text, "Good things always come out of the Nazareths of this world," preaching that London is death to a man who worships his art as his religion.[12] He reappears in *Empty Vessels,* at a Sunday afternoon gathering of literary lions, and gives the very same declaration of

faith; the tense is changed, dots indicate the pauses described in the earlier record, but the speech is the same one.[13]

Oliver Creed, in *The Enchantress,* is characterized as "a student of human nature;"[14] and the passage enumerating qualities such a student must own is repeated in *The City of the World.*[15]

8) The delirious prayers of Crispin Pix,[16] in the hours of his starvation have been said by Cortilear in an early sketch,[17] though with less dramatic effectiveness. The passage in *Punch and Judy*[18] that compares a full meal and the delight of its anticipation to the blessed minute's interval between the rounds of a punishing boxing contest is rewritten from *The Fruit of the Vine.*[19] The whole passage describing so brilliantly the fantasy of exhaustion that throbs through Maddie Marmory's brain—the having to do monotonous and foolish things under the pressure of shortness of time and the fear of terrible consequences if they be left undone[20] —re-occurs verbatim in *Punch and Judy,* as the experience of the love-sick artist Olly Uulys.[21]

The page or so in the short-story entitled "Consolation,"[22] that begins, "First love in a man is but diverted egotism," and calls the woman pursued "a creature of the imagination . . . the oldest wanton," and that ends "Happy is he if he pursue her vainly. . . . But woe is his if, seeking to grasp the glorious shadow, he secure the sorry substance!"—is spoken also by the rhapsodizing Bartholomew Dole in *Punch and Judy*[23] and is found finally in *The Secret Years,* rewritten with improvements and blemishes.[24]

9) An unprofitable task it would be to note every re-occurrence of the sententious turns of phrase of which Pugh was so fond, and in which his polished art enabled him to excel; but a suggestion of the frequency with which, as one reads Pugh, apothegms mused over in earlier books or earlier in the same book meet the eye again ought to be given by some examples. After his wife has died in childbirth, Saxon Basterfield reflects in Biblical phrase upon the blood and tears that are shed to enrich the soil;[25] the same passage of philosophy you find in the essay, "Private Heroines and Public Heroes."[26] The idea that truth is most improbable is expressed in *Peter Vandy,* in *The Enchantress,* in *The Secret Years,* and in *Punch and Judy.*[27] That happiness is a state of being, not of circumstance alone, is said in *The Eyes of a Child,*

in *The Secret Years,* in *Punch and Judy.*[28] That familiar things are hardest to describe you read in *A Street in Suburbia* and again in *The City of the World.*[29] One may recall five places, at least, in which tact is declared to be an insult to the intelligent person whom it is supposed to spare.[30] The apothegm that "he makes love well who makes love badly," is found in *Peter Vandy* and in *Empty Vessels.*[31] Twice, at least, you read that it is in time of trouble that a man discovers who are his friends and then he discovers that he has none.[32] After you have pondered over the opinion, expressed in *Peter Vandy,* that it is easier to hate a man for his faults than to love him for his virtues, but easiest to hate him for his virtues, and read it again in *Punch and Judy,* it becomes almost Gospel truth when you find it rewritten in *A Book of Laughter.*[33] Jenifer's argument in defense of her little lie to Corrillian, that there is no commandment against lying, only against backbiting, in rewritten in *A Book of Laughter.*[34]

10) Pugh repeats similes and descriptive phrases for the same apparent reason that he repeats entire passages, his joy in a phrase or a page turned with lovely or brilliant effect. I have marked three times the use of his exquisite comparison of beautiful teeth between full red lips, to snow in the heart of a scarlet flower.[35] In *Punch and Judy,* the first operetta collaborated in by Pix and Dole is referred to as a baby alive and kicking; the same comparison is drawn to Tobias Morgan's first book, told about in *The Secret Years.*[36] Several times the change is rung on the thought that there are many who cannot do things and yet do them.[37] Unforgettable is the similie, "cold-boiled baby," occurring twice.[38] Almost an obsession with Pugh are the descriptive terms sketching the mouth as, "a lipless gash of a mouth,"[39] or "thin-lipped,"[40] or "crooked slit of a mouth,"[41] or "shrivelled lips closed in a thin crooked line,"[42] or "lipless mouth."[43] Three times you find expressed the idea of a phantom audience to which a character plays imaginatively. In *The Fruit of the Vine* it is "The Invisible Audience"; in *The Shuttlecock* it is "a vast and invisible host of guardian angels and lost spirits for . . . audience"; and in *Peter Vandy* it is phrased as "an innumerable multitude of derelict souls who watch and judge us . . . this regardant spiritual company."[44] The figure explaining how Death has been

reduced to a shadow, by overwork among the poor, you meet in *Peter Vandy* and in *The City of the World* as well.[45]

II

MANNER AND FORM

i

The Reflective Mood

It was Pugh's fate not to be of the tribe of novelists who, like Dickens, have the habit of submerging themselves with gusto in the life about them, and who are exclusively creative. He belonged to those whom life assails, even tortures, and who crowd their art with evidences of their own brooding spirit. The reflective type naturally turns to his own life as matter for creative writing, because he is the world in which his experiences have been played. The large autobiographic element in Pugh's novels has been pointed out, its varieties and its repetitions, but the reflective element,—in forms of philosophical essay, apothegm, or analysis of motive,—whose fruits have already been studied, requires a word here of technical comment.

The philosophical mood occurs already in the first book: it is not a product of age alone. It wears a creative guise in the reminiscings over that old National School that was scened later in three novels, and it appears in the timid offering of a few apothegms. There is only one instance of it in *The Man of Straw,* —which was intended, presumably, and with success, to have the objectivity of a novel by Zola,—and that instance is a sentimental maxim about women. The sententious mood is vocal in rare moments in *King Circumstance, Tony Drum,* and *Mother-Sister;* but in *The Stumbling Block* it finds its true voice, and is heard in the serious speech of the characters, in axioms and brief essays interpolated by the author. The philosophical and critical vein gives way again in *The Fruit of the Vine* to that of pure narrative, and also in the next two books the thinker contributes only a brief aside or two. With *The Shuttlecock* Pugh finally asserts

the sententious manner that had been given its way in only one novel heretofore. From then on we are not surprised to witness a simple or a dramatic situation climaxed by an illuminating apothegm or essay in little, or made the subject of brilliant philosophical talk by chorusing characters. The philosophic element is well mixed into the talk of people in *Punch and Judy* and *Empty Vessels,* but crushes the life out of *The Eyes of a Child* and *The Secret Years* by its garrulous unrestraint and sheer dead weight.

Of direct analysis there is a light burden in those novels that are not biographical or autobiographical. *The Man of Straw, Tony Drum, The Enchantress, The Spoilers,* need none, for they are completely objectified. In two, *Mother-Sister* and *The Shuttlecock,* the people whose mental processes are not patently inductable from their actions are heard giving us the benefit of their self-insight. The greater portion of analysis supplied to help us understand the elusive personality of Crispin Pix is rendered in the conversation of the master student of the mind, Bartholomew Dole. Very little analysis goes into the characterization of Punch and the other minor characters in *Punch and Judy.* Infrequent also, and very brief are the analytic passages in *The Heritage* and *The Stumbling Block.* The analysis is eased in *Empty Vessels* by the device of being offered as mental narrative, and as the product of the hero's insight. In *The Quick and the Dead* also does mental narrative convey the largest part of motivation that would otherwise have to be supplied by the author acting as commentator; there is little analytic discussion or direct analysis to supplement the mental narrative. Two novels, *The Quick and the Dead* and *Empty Vessels,* would have actually been clearer and better books with more direct analysis to correlate and to illuminate circumstances and motives.

The autobiographical novels show us Pugh in his congenial mood of reflection upon motive. *The Broken Honeymoon* is the most minutely analytic book of all, but more readable than the later autobiographical novels about Tobias Morgan because its analysis is startling and pertinent. The analysis in *Peter Vandy* supplied by the supposedly admiring biographer is nearly useless; whatever understanding we have of the hero is gained through the narrative.

ii

The Colloquial Form

Excellent as is Pugh's gift for the sententious remark, his success in putting wise reflections on human values and motives into the mouths of his people and making them sound as if they had really been spoken is a final proof of his genius for the colloquial. Reference has already been made to his occasionally conceiving his novels as dramas, and to his expertness in chapter technique. *A Street in Suburbia* first showed off his skill in the achievement of drama through speech. The gift lags for several books, perhaps because of the author's straining for polish to his narrative style and for greater mastery over form. From *Tony Drum* on it regains its energy; almost the whole volume is in dialogue. In *The Stumbling Block* it becomes really masterful, still a little precious, but brilliant in its rushes of passionate talk. In *The Fruit of the Vine* are bursts of lyricism spoken in an overpowering mood of recollection. Its perfection in Pugh is seen in *The Shuttlecock,* which is written almost entirely in dialogue carried on through a rapid succession of marvellously well-wrought scenes. It is notable in *The Spoilers, The Enchantress,* and in *Empty Vessels,* but is merely abundant in *Punch and Judy.* But the genius of Pugh in the colloquial art is not fully proved until one turns to the sketches in *The Cockney at Home,* and there discovers his power of making a host of pavement treaders of various degrees of wit have their say in living tones modified by the grace of artistic reserve.

iii

Mystery

The realistic-reflective artist has by nature very small sympathy with a mood which the romantic-inventive artist enjoys exciting, that of suspense; for that reason the constructive attempts at a mystery are rare in Pugh. There is not one surprise in the short-stories, and though a hundred opportunities lay within the easy

reach of Pugh to heighten suspense in his novels, he succumbed to only one, outside, of course, of his frankly pot-boiling romances. In *The Enchantress* Pugh shows how easy it is to keep a secret from his readers and spring it upon them like a jack-in-the-box with great effect. The scene in which Lydia Mersey, in the guise of a street walker, gives herself to Jerry Parradyne without the reader's being aware of her identity is perfectly handled to motivate a legitimate surprise. It is supremely good because we are so caught off our guard by its casualness that we do not realize its mystery and meaning until the church scene of Lydia's wedding brings its revelation. Milder, but effective also, is the confession in the same novel of Mrs. Gantry to her daughter that the baronet of the house of Parradyne had led her astray.

iv

Melodrama

Although the realist as a rule has little taste for mystery, he may, to vary the quiet tones, resort occasionally to melodrama; and because Pugh is primarily the subjective realist, his melodrama is as likely to be mental as physical. The moments of mental melodrama, of hysteria, anguish, or painful fantasy, are not many, but they exist.

The notable scenes of objective melodrama are, Jill Armourer's drowning, in *The Stumbling Block;* the frankly fancied account of the murder of Bolsover's slum mistress, obviously written to revive the waning story of *The Fruit of the Vine;* the duel with the shoemakers' knives of Peter Cowcross and Chick Marketer and the climactic scene of *The Spoilers,* in which Cowcross announces his victory to Judith, Judith collapses, and Cowcross slashes his throat; Mamie's dragging her sister, who is trying to prevent her from eloping with Pallister, to the edge of a railroad track to make her loose her hold or die, in the climax of *The Shuttlecock;* the quarrel of Corrillian and Taskover, and Taskover's death, and later, Corrillian's, by falling from a cliff, in *The Quick and the Dead.* Even *The Eyes of a Child*

has its promise of melodrama in the anecdote, removed from actuality by retelling, of the drowning of Tobias Morgan's godfather.

The sensitiveness of Pugh's instinct is shown by his restraint when melodrama would seem unavoidable. Consider how completely *The Man of Straw* is kept from any suggestion of the melodramatic that would spoil its rendering of the deep shadows of a debauched life. Coldershaw's fight with Kilmorie and his murder of Alice Shallers are told without strain, and the murder of Coldershaw by Eve is described with a restraint in perfect accord with the quiet determination of the murderess.

The more impressive scenes of subjective melodrama are those impersonally created: the fantasy and delirium of that starving mediocrity of a poet, Cortilear in "The Singer of Dreams;"[46] and of Crispin Pix; and of Featherfew, of "The Starvelling Poet;"[47] the nightmare of exhaustion suffered by Maddie Marmory after she has saved her sister[48] the hysteria of Olly Ulys after his madcap attempt to assassinate the premier has been turned into a comedy;[49] and the fantasy of terror that agonizes the two murderers, Coldershaw and Cowcross.[50] The whole development of Jenifer's adoration for the memory of Taskover is of the stuff of romantic hysteria. But Smallpiece's suffering under the torture applied by the vulgar woman to whose passionate spell he is a weak prey is of the melodrama of real life.

III

STYLE

i

Narrative Prose

From the very beginning the style of Pugh is that of a sensitive and sincere artist. In *A Street in Suburbia* the writing is sparse, objective, and undistinguished, but a certain spirit of loving-kindness and humor, and the playacting at middle age impart a calmly sentimental tone nevertheless. The general effect is one of slight

energy, and therefore a well-assured restraint in the handling of emotional material. The stylistic serenity of that book is absent in the second, *The Man of Straw;* where the style is hard and critical, though definite, instead of pleasantly objective. Here is an impression of things seen on a spring day: "Merrily-idle crowds passed and repassed . . . haggard men and women, decked in holiday bravery, inflated with the invincible human instinct toward happiness; old, old, children, solicitous for the welfare of their fellow progeny, . . . youth entering puberty, venting its superabundant vitality in aimless horseplay."[51] Such a spirit of revulsion and hardness of tone are understandable in a sensitive Gissing jostled by the mob, but are a shock after the sympathetic temper of the first book. The indirect lyrical manner occurs for the first time in the passages describing Eve Hardrop and her father in their very humble rooms, and again in the parts dealing with the Dickensy pair, honest Dick Underton and his sister Sue. But the joyful mood is generally hidden under the baleful hardness caught from Coldershaw's personality. The hardness is held fixed by a nervous tension whose endurance for the length of the book serves as proof of the author's power and a hint of what he was to do when his genius had a pleasanter subject. The writing of *Tony Drum* has improved very noticeably. It is as unlabored as the writing in the first book, but the simplicity has won distinction by acquiring finesse. The artist has been busy learning to whittle down his sentences to the point of conveying images with the least possible reminder of the purely verbal. Its matter is sentimental, but sentiment is suggested largely through the overtones of a simple restrained diction. A finer skill in achieving rhythm in narrative prose is to be observed, but that rhythm has not yet the richness that was to come, and there is no occasion for it here.

King Circumstance offers a variety of styles, natural and assumed. A number of stories are written without any distinguishable touches, but more suggest the veins of style that Pugh was to develop. In "The Watchmaker" there is that descriptive prose that has the quality of being spoken with intense feeling: indirect lyricism. In "Consolation" that same feeling throbs in a passage inaugurating Pugh's flights into the philosophy of life. In "The

Poor Idealist" Pugh's tendency to write with a lift to his prose is again made manifest. But there are signs of mimicking in several stories. The first part of "The Little Lady" is essence of Anthony Hope, in its smart dialogue, flavoring of mild pathos, its gesturing and asides to the reader by the man who retells the story, in all the overtones of a style revealing the chivalrous and superior male and his amusement over a woman whose boasted strength of mind is shown unequal to her craving for sentiment. "The Liar" seems an offspring of the fiction of Henry James in its deliberately bleached, analytic sketching of a situation; all the inimitable effects but the diction of James appear to have been copied. "Appearances" could easily have been the result of a reading of Mary Wilkins's stories; the situation is not native with Pugh, and its technique of suggesting the feelings of its people through their reticences is peculiar, otherwise, to Mary Wilkins. A compressed manner rules *Mother-Sister,* two-thirds of which is done in an even grey tone. The climax spurs the style to a fervor that gradually dies away to a calm.

Without definite knowledge as to the method of collaboration that was employed in *The Heritage,* one can do no more than notice that certain passages of lovers' talk and mental narrative are unmistakably Pugh, and that the larger part of it is too cold, colorless and commonplace to have been actually written by him.

A prose sympathetically interpreting high and happy emotions or strong, unworried passion, is seen extensively first in *The Stumbling Block.* Dignity, liveliness and delicacy are there exhibited in full measure; the phrasing is as unworn as that of an exquisitely turned lyric. The very next book, *The Fruit of the Vine,* is written in a lyrical style that is made convincing by its perfect fidelity to the moods of the confessor. Its rapturous rhythms and imagery were never again attempted in such a sustained effort.

The romance *The Purple Head* does not have the energy of its immediate predecessors, but its impersonal method still shares their vividness and nicety. The writing has a caressing effect, a simple sweet melodiousness, and a pictorial clarity unique in the romance of our day; its phrases are allusive tints of color, snatches of song, measures of graceful rhythm.

The Spoilers marks a resting period in style. It is strong, carefully wrought narrative, impersonal and exactly appropriate to its mixture of melodrama and comedy.

The narrative prose of *The Shuttlecock* is exquisite and firm, but the burden of the story is told in dramatic dialogue. The style of *The Enchantress* is lack-lustre by comparison, un-individual and tired, though again careful in the qualities that are independent of inspiration. That cannot be said of *The Broken Honeymoon,* which reads like a desperate attempt to recover the vitality of *The Fruit of the Vine.* It may have been done in a time of deep mental turmoil, perhaps in a gesture of catharsis, and never been reworked. It remains crude rhetoric. One might also suppose it to be very early work published late, if one had not noticed a decline in energy that was to continue until it found its nadir in the second book following. It is written in a heavy adjective-noun style so wholly unlike the best of Pugh, and yet it is guaranteed authentic by its forerunners in *King Circumstance.* There are rushes of descriptive and narrative rhapsody, but they are blundering charges at the mood. In *Peter Vandy* the writing sinks further to an abstract, unfused medium, though still correct and rhythmical; it drowns in the pool of inanity that is called *The Mocking Bird.*

Two years later a revival of control and energy appears in *Harry the Cockney.* The writing is simple and sober, in keeping with the background of the hero and appropriate to its method of self-analysis combined with frank revelation. It glows to a heat of a less fervent rapture than there has been in Pugh, and ends on a dignified minor strain. The prose in *Punch and Judy* is less fluent again. It is good concrete writing, with little grace or humor, excepting in its clinching lines. Whatever in it has passion and lift comes from old material that has been rewritten, or from the dialogue. The commonplace narrative prose in *The Cockney at Home* aims to be only a setting for the speech of the characters sketched in that book.

The high water mark of the second wave of energy occurs in *The Quick and the Dead;* it is an energy of a kind that has already been observed in *The Broken Honeymoon. The Quick and the Dead* seems, in fact, a transposition of the earlier book,

with the motif altered, but in the same hysterical mood. To give a lift to the later book Pugh tried to pitch it in a romantic key, instead of the realistic. Of all the books this has the greatest variety of styles, but they seem to have been whipped up to their intensity, rather than overflowing with superabundant power. The hysterical theme of the book corrupts the writing and makes it wordy, strained, and artificial. The mental narrative is, strangely for Pugh, hard and abstract. The fantastic vein, already done with dignity when guided by restraint, breaks out in a stampede of ranting. The patches of direct analysis in which Pugh excelled are apt to be as awkward as a schoolboy's attempt to be "psychological." The passages unharmed by the troubled spirit of the book are rare. One occurs when that spirit changes for a moment to mellow recollection. And there are also the lines that tell of the white night Roger spends fighting to throw off the sexual spell that Jenifer has cast upon him. Here is perfect control of style over matter. Perhaps Pugh remembered the first crude version he had written describing the agony of Smallpiece in a similar struggle, and learned to do the scene better. But even this latter passage is marred by the crudeness of an abstract kind of imagery and a cacophony that the author would never have allowed to pass in his best hours. There is control again in the last scene of the book, that describes Corrillian's falling from the cliff over which he had thrown Taskover.

The narrative style of *The Eyes of a Child* has indeed sobriety, and that to a fault. It is in too quiet an emotional pitch to express the adventures that make childhood a bewildering kaleidoscope. It is relatively dull, borrowing the abstract, analytical diction of the propaganda that overburdens the book. A second reason for the dullness of style is that Pugh apparently recalled childhood scenes for himself instead of recreating them dramatically; his energy is dissipated in the task of recollecting everyday details, and none is left to give life and feeling to the thing remembered. There is no tang, no verve, no joy to the writing. The philosophic passages are earnest and strong, but over-heavy. In *The Secret Years* the narrative style recovers some of its vitality, and something of Pugh's lyrical power glows, though not strongly, in the final chapter that celebrates Morgan's first love. Pugh does wisely

to keep us aware of his middle-aged culling from youth; for so he conceals the fact that he has lost command of the art of creating childhood scenes with the memorable power he had shown in *The Fruit of the Vine.* He had retold the story of his life too often to retell it once more with any real zest.

The World is My Oyster contains the second flowering of the romantic spirit that had bloomed so finely in *The Purple Head.* The style of it is as well polished as that of its predecessors, but stiffer in movement and vaguer in imagery. It is a chameleon-like thing, now weakly recalling an intense emotional mood, now colloquial in a polished-careless tone, then lyrical in its nature-sketching, again plain hackneyed adventure-story heading pell-mell for melodrama, or in the spirited reportorial manner of *The Cockney at Home,* with dashes of medieval romance and sprinklings of mental analysis.

"And so they talked and walked on happily, but for the most part in silence, and the moon made all things holy.

"And so at last they had come to this quiet place in a little tang of coppice, and the Boy had made a fire of dead wood, and then had lain him down with a sigh of rich contentment, and so fallen asleep, whilst the man and the dog kept vigil together."

But the next paragraph goes off abruptly on an analytical tangent. "What were Adrian's thoughts? . . . Adrian was of his age and type. Reticent in speech not so much because of any natural reserve but because he was so largely inarticulate. Nor was he given to introspection."[52] . . . Such faulty taste exemplifies Pugh's uneven discipline over his art.

In *Empty Vessels* the dignity aimed at in the previous romance is achieved, and with a new, unforced vigor. The various strands of mood natural to Pugh are woven together evenly and delicately; the imaginative verging on hysteria, intense passion, dreamy romance, rapture, humor both acrid and gentle, simple dramatic narrative, sentimental reminiscence, the analytic interpretation, and also, two Dickensy moods not native to Pugh,—the caricaturing and the animistical-descriptive manners. All these moods are here, and all are blended into a congruous pattern. There is no better writing in Pugh outside of that perfect short-story "Martha's Young Man,"[53] whose marvelous simplicity and aptness of phras-

ing and emotional balance are most nearly approached in the last novel.

ii

Speech

Pugh's mastery of the colloquial has been referred to, but it deserves more than a reference. Its ease, naturalness, flexibility to all trends of character, and its abundant use are found in the very first book. There Pugh adopts the phonographic technique of the time, but his skill in the reticences keep wholly genuine the talk of workers and idlers, of wives and daughters. Humorous and earnest round-table discussions of men, the gossip of wives, merry and deadly repartee, eloquent speeches in the humorously philosophic vein, the eloquent nonsense of a nostrum vendor, wit and punning are here, very pleasantly done, in a quiet, probing, diffident manner, not at all hinting at any great reserves of power. In *The Man of Straw* first appears the promise and proof of a kind of dialogue and monologue in which Pugh excells brilliantly. You hear it when Eva and her father, the broken down actor and drunkard, vagrant son of a titled sire, together plan the beautiful luxuries they will enjoy when their dream-ship comes home. In that dialogue you see the first of a line of rapturous spoken scenes, care-free as the "wordicuffs" of the young artists in *The Stumbling Block;* the love-making of Bria and Saxon, of Grispin and Una, of Benjamin and Felicity. And the flow of suave wit, spiced with the memories of Shakesperian roles, that falls from the lips of the quack nostrum-vendor, Isaac Hardrop, carries over the eloquence of a Phil Evers to the lyrical revelations of the sensitive, articulate folk who follow in the later novels; of Maddie Marmory confessing her utter devotion to her family;[54] of Gideon Bolsover retelling his life-story; of Jenifer's hysterical adoration for the dead Taskover;[55] of Lydia Mersey confessing her love for the theatre and her hatred of man's worshipping a woman's body;[56] of Gourowski's ardent defense of Anarchism;[57] of Sunny's praise of the outdoors and the call of the road;[58] of the prostitute, Mog, warning Olly Ulys against suc-

cumbing to the narcotic fascination of the underworld;[59] of Corrillian charging Taskover with persecuting him;[60] of Beryl Waddilove vehemently revolting from her family's oppression;[61] of the rapturous confessions of love that Felicity offers to Benjamin, that Mamie, Arabella, and Miriam offer to David Pallister, that Bria makes to Saxon;[62] of the philosophical discourses of Dole, Jubal Coopless, Mme. Carr, and Cora Merriam.[63]

Brilliant as the rapturous monologues are, it is also well to remember the flexibility of Pugh's idiom. He records the voices of the humble, respectable Cockney,—though not his slang—and of beggar, thief, gossip, litterateur, with equal conviction.

Another matter of interest in the dialogue is its repartee. It is subtly cruel jibing with which Rosetta torments Smallpiece, in *The Broken Honeymoon.* Most of the humorous repartee is contained in *The Cockney at Home* and *A Book of Laughter,* and it is a delight to read. Its technique is simple. It may demand the twisting of a phrase out of one idiomatic meaning into another idiomatic or literal meaning. It holds as fair game any statement that unconsciously assumes its author's superiority, and delights in reversing that opinion. Its prize is the general laugh that a fellow creature's sudden humiliation will produce. There is some repartee in *Empty Vessels,* that ranges from the deliberately offensive innuendo, like Beryl's attack on Roost for his superior airs, to the exchange of sarcasm between Roost and his younger brother, and the devastatingly right as well as the witty replies of Beryl to her sister's silly chaffing.

iii

Typography

There is a matter of technique which falls somewhere on the outskirts of style; it is really a question of topography. In *The Man of Straw* Pugh comments upon Coldershaw's kissing his mother perfunctorily. "It is thus men kiss their mothers!"[64] And some pages later, he remarks upon the same man's eagerness to kiss Hetty Du Cane: "It is thus men kiss their mistresses!"[65] Both of these observations are printed in italics, and as a result

a contrast that is only a commonplace truism receives a narrative emphasis which it, of course, does not deserve, and which wrecks the balance of the whole first part of the book. Elsewhere in the same book italics are used to indicate a stress in speech. Pronouns are printed in capitals for the same reason, to indicate a vocal stress. "HE's a reg'lar hanger-on;" and, "Perhaps you're going to meet HIM?"[66]

In two other books does Pugh take, in a limited way, the liberties of Pierce Egan, of Bulwer, of Dickens, and of Reade. In *A Street in Suburbia* a friend of a widow for whom a benefit has been planned reminds his hearers of THE FRIENDLY LEAD. In *Empty Vessels* Maude refers exasperatedly to Beryl as "the FOOL," and Roost wonders: "Is Beryl trying to take a rise out of ME!"[67] The matter is of no other interest than to reopen the question of how legitimate is the manipulation of type for the sake of emphasis.

iv

Diction

Pugh aimed from the beginning at a style that should be not only fluent and clear, but fresh and unworn; and it is natural that he should have wrought into use words that are a little uncommon. There are, susurrus and gringolade in *King Circumstance:* chivy, in *The Fruit of the Vine;* in *The Purple Head,* susurrus again, and a gaggle of geese, and featly, sneb, snaggle; in *The Spoilers,* nepenthe, and eldritch; in *The Mocking Bird,* adytum; in *Harry the Cockney,* eldritch again, and griding, convive, congener; in *Punch and Judy,* gringolades, congeners, succubus, eldritch. In *The Quick and the Dead* is a favorite, used often in other books later on,—burgeoning, and also regardant, gride, hunker, tenebrous; in *A Book of Laughter,* transmogrification, pringling; in *The World is My Oyster,* transmogrified. That taste for the unusual word survives in *Empty Vessels,* where you find, camber, carmagnole, maffickings, featly, mumchance, titupped, and that delicate treat for the ear, burgeoned, more than once.

v

Similes

The striving for vividness brought to life a number of admirable tropes, creations of an artist in words. There is poetry in this picture of two lovers and their intimacy, perhaps it is called from some poem unknown to me: "Seven weeks. One may crowd the essence of a lifetime into as many hours, minutes. They had grown to one another in that brief while as the ivy to the old church wall."[68] The heart of a father or a mother must find joy in the conceit that describes "the infant . . . so fresh from heaven she smells of the angels;"[69] again we may not be dealing with an original figure, but the appreciation is there, certainly. The mother of a difficult son is imagined as having "the patience of a spider that has spun her web in a foolish place."[70]

The directly descriptive similes are usually happy; the best of them conjure up images of flowers. An aged mother's cheek "was of soft loose texture like a faded rose petal."[71] A beautiful girl has "a wilful mouth, revealing strong white teeth between full, red lips, like snow in the heart of a scarlet flower."[72] To the child of twelve precociously turning out a story "the harsh scraping of my pen as it travelled laboriously over the rough surface of the paper was like an angel's whisper in my ear."[73]

Vivid are the similes heard in the speech of the talkative Cockneys: "Like a flea and a slug trying to walk together in the garden of Eden;"[74] and "the mud was that thick you seemed to take root at every step;"[75] and the Cockney's cynicism over charity is recorded in one comparison, "as miserable as the man what does good by stealth an' never gets found out."[76] The metaphorical order given at a coffee stall seems to have resulted equally from a fatalistic temperament and an alert imagination: "Two cups o' sudden-death and some of the very best dead-fly cake."[77] A single instance occurs of a metaphor apparently after Meredith's style: "Crispin's face had hoisted the red ensign."[78] But Dickens too had lighted upon such metaphors.

We have seen, in review, that as a craftsman Pugh proved himself possessor of as sensitive an ear for melody and rhythm

as any modern writer can vaunt. His skill in the creation of a single dramatic scene is also of high order. But his discipline over the larger architectonics is very uncertain: it is sometimes perfect, it is often faulty. Surprising too is the erratic nature of his creative powers: when his energy is high and zest keen, his writing belongs among the good things of literature; when his energy falls, it is apt to drop supine. There seems to have been a small reserve of bodily energy or mental balance to carry him through the period of lesser inspiration.

THE LONDON SETTING

i

The Glamour of London

Pugh needed London as urgently as did Dickens. Without knowing London Pugh would have lacked not only raw material for his writings but also the environment needed to sustain creative excitement. London, as a place and as a spirit, obsessed Pugh's imagination. You feel that Pugh is reliving his own adventures in the person of his shabby hero Peter Vandy when he describes the man searching through unknown streets the length and breadth of the city for oases of beauty. "He came to know the sovereign city under every aspect of light and darkness, shine and shade. . . . He got to know her highways and byways, her parks and pleasant places—the inner meanings of them all. . . . He was (as he said) the last great discoverer. Columbus, in his new found continent, had no more joy or pride of heart than he in his new found metropolis." That revelation of zest in discovering London's varieties of sights and humors is given in the very same words by Gideon Bolsover, in *The Fruit of the Vine,* and is owned to finally by Pugh himself writing in his own person in a descriptive book, *The City of the World.*[1]

Ferdinand Smallpiece also seeks for romance in the look of London's thoroughfares and environs, though his companion, Rosetta, has no inner eye to register the beauties that he sees. In his all-night vigil with Rosetta on Hampstead Heath, Ferdinand forgets the girl asleep on the bench beside him, to watch the sky above the city as dawn sifts through. Pugh surely felt the scene as he dreamed it, but a rhetorical mood spoiled what might have been a beautiful hymn of praise to London.[2] Another bit deserves mention. It is the passage that tells how Parradyne, riding on a boat train from Dover, enters London at night, when its glamour is weird with kaleidoscopic sequences of brilliant light over swarming crowds, and masses of pitchy blackness.[3] Life at Gallions, in *The Quick and the Dead,* is retold with clarity and conviction; but

when the scenes shift to London, the pulse of the writing speeds up, a zest quickens action and sense of place beyond the effect of craft alone.[4]

ii

The London Setting

The haunts through which Harry Weaver and Alfred Popple quest for victims to their expertise in sudden love comprise the parts of London where scenes for novels and stories are laid most often.[5] As familiar as the inside of their homes are the monkey parades of Hampstead Heath, Kentish Town Road, Upper Street, Islington, Regents Park and Hyde Park, Pentonville Hill, and the Angel. Good-looking Bertie Amplett, the shopwalker's son, also displays his figure for the regard of Kentish Town Road ladies.[6] In the region embracing Kentish Town and Camden Town are spent most of the years in the youth of Gideon Bolsover, Tobias Morgan, John Coldershaw, Benjamin Roost, and Mark Gillies.[7] In Kentish Town Peter Vandy lives with the schoolmaster Simeon Quaife. In its slums Maddie Marmory's brood nearly worry the life out of her.[8] Olly Ulys takes lodgings in Kentish Town before he sets out on his insane journey to the home of the Premier in Surrey.[9] Near the waste land at its northern extremity lives the widow Moll Matters, who turned kidnapper to have her child to love.[10]

The spot visited most frequently by the lovers and philanderers is Hampstead Heath. On it Dood Marmony and Billy Baddle treat their girls to all the beer and fish and cokernut shies, swings, and merry-go-rounds that are to be enjoyed on Bank Holiday *(Mother-Sister)*. On the morning after his night of reckless gambling Olly Ulys *(Punch and Judy)* comes to his senses while he is walking over the Heath; it must have been a favorite and familiar spot to have called him when he was out of his mind. There Bertie Amplett courts Minnie Bates in his self-admiring fashion.[11] On one of its benches Ferdinand Smallpiece and Rosetta Conover sit out that long night following Rosetta's rebellion at home, and Ferdinand proposes marriage to the bullying

enchantress.[12] Up and down the Heath tramp Adrian Pybus and the Rosalind who infects him with the spell of the outdoors. In a tea-garden in the North End Road the boy sings comic ballads, and Adrian enacts a comic-tragical song to prove to the proprietor that he is not being supported by the boy. Hampstead, Parliament Hill, the Vale of Health, Spaniards Road, the Flagstaff, are haunts beloved by Adrian; his love is a Cockney's worship of Pan.[13] Benjamin Roost and Beryl Waddilove climb up and drift down the slopes of the Heath, and drink tea at the Vale of Health;[14] so do Tobias Morgan and Fanny Cashion. On the sward Tobias and Fanny enjoyed their frank embraces, screened by the very openness that guards all London lovers on every heath and common. Before he had met Fanny, Tobias had played with Lucy Camp in the fields behind Parliament Hill.[15] And in Hampstead village live the sentimental spinster Miss Porch and her paying guest, Mr. Gandy.[16]

Holloway Road is another monkey parade that is mentioned as the meeting place of a junior clerk and a shop-girl coquette.[17]

Somewhere between Camden Town and Somers Town, near Hampstead Road, is Mr. Gantry's bookshop, in which live, besides the proprietress, Oliver Creed and Lydia Mersey.[18] Within the borders of Somers Town Peter Vandy was born. Adrian Pybus serves as a billiard marker in a Somers Town public house; and in the same region was the barn, named the Old Bughouse, at which Tobias Morgan fought in volunteer boxing bouts.[19]

In Bloomsbury Eva Coldershaw establishes a millinery shop after her separation from John.[20] Roger Corrillian, toward the end of his student days lived in rooms near Russell Square.[21] Peter Vandy boards near Tottenham Court Road while he is still engaged to Clara Fillery. Harry Weaver's Uncle Algernon, the law-copyist, turns out his reams of script in a cellar room off Holborn, convenient to Lincoln's Inn Fields.[22]

Marylebone is the birthplace of Harry Weaver and Gideon Bolsover.[23] The barber-shop of Harry's father was located on Cleveland Street. Bria Ormathwaite was born probably in Marylebone too, but more to the west, in the Welsh section.[24] Fitzroy Square is one of the most popular addresses of Pugh's folk; it is referred to nearly as often as Hampstead Heath. The boarding

house in which the runaway aristocrat and painter Tommy Johnson resides stands in Fitzroy Square.[25] Nearby the musician Coseni lives; his rooms are the scene of the double poisoning of himself and Jenifer.[26] Tobias Morgan's Uncle Holebright lives in the square too; Olly Ulys has a studio there; and Bria Ormathwaite lives in the neighborhood.

In a Tottenham Court Road fish shop Moll Matters stops to feed Bet Grewles, whom she kidnapped; and in Euston Road, near the station, the child is run over by a wagon.[27] A coffee-stall in Euston Road furnishes Adrian Pybus with humble refreshment.[28]

Southward, Adrian Pybus obtains employment for a short time in Covent Garden Market. Una Vani's rooms are in Saint Martin's Lane,[29] and Felicity Coopless begins to live her independent career as a sempstress in a flat off Trafalgar Square.[30] Dick Underton, before his sister joins him, rooms near Charing Cross.[31] At a second-hand clothes shop in the vicinity of Charing Cross, Adrian Pybus has his rich but incongruous garments exchanged for a seemlier, if less durable, costume.

Of an autumn evening, Benjamin Roost and Jubal Coopless turn into St. James Park; the dew on the grass, the bluish mist over the water, the doleful quacking of ducks paddling in the lake, the pairs of lovers, combine into a melancholy picture.[32] In that park also Adrian Pybus meets the Outanouter who has been hired by his uncle to shadow and befriend him.

In Soho is the Badgers Club, where the entertainment is gambling, boxing, and carousing.[33] Most of the scenes of *Punch and Judy* are laid in Soho's eastern labyrinth. Off Shaftesbury Avenue is the house in which Squire Consterdine has gathered the master thieves of Europe.[34]

Few important scenes are laid definitely eastward of Tottenham Court Road. Harry Weaver visits the Angel.[35] Maddie Marmory coaxes a Spitalfields employment manager to give her work sewing ties at home.[36] Tobias Morgan fills the leisurely duties required of him in Hosea Mackelvin's office in Cheapside.[37] The solicitors, Keogh and Maw, with whom Smallpiece is a clerk, are in the City also.[38] Mollie overtakes Corrillian as he walks through Fore Street, to warn him of the affair that Jenifer and Coseni are carrying on in Gallions.[39] Adrian Pybus works in the Smith-

field Market for a short time.[40] In Petticoat Lane Dood Marmory buys himself a suit.[41]

To the north, Beryl and Benjamin visit the village of Chingford, near Epping Forrest; and in Highgate Chick Marketer kills the owner of a house he has robbed.[42]

On the south bank of the Thames is the setting for *The Spoilers*. Deuce Marketer spends his earlier days in Lambeth, in the region about the New Cut; eventually he migrates to Pugh's favorite Kentish Town, where is the home of the spinster Miss Porch. In Stamford Street, Adrian expends the extravagant sum of one and eleven pence upon a meal at an ordinary pub. It is while walking across Southwark Bridge that Tommy Johnson counters the play-acting would-be suicide whom he persuades to pose as Tommy himself.[43] Gideon Bolsover, at the depth of his disgrace, steals a night's lodging on a barge at Bankside.[44] Further east, in a foul cellar in Rotherhithe, Coldershaw murders Alice Shallers, the maid he had seduced.[45] To the West, we remember Jenifer living in a Battersea flat, happy in the evening just to look at the shimmering Embankment across the river.[46] To the Southeast, in Camberwell, Dick Underton took his sister Sue when she came up to London to keep house for him.[47]

Westward, we may follow the path Benjamin and Beryl take one Sunday afternoon, as they walk from Hammersmith to Putney Heath. In Hammersmith Adrian Pybus, a tramp in externals, retaliates upon a brusque policeman with a University accent that immediately produces friendly directions to a good doss-house. In Fulham are the homes of both Rocky Warlock and Haviland,[48] the two young men whose savoir-faire and openness of manner and happy homes unspoiled by affectation attract Harry Weaver and Gideon Bolsover in separate novels.

iii

Features of London Life

The institutions of London's surface life are painted as a rule without sympathy in the novels, though in the books of sketches they are rich in both sentiment and humor. Only in *A Street in*

Suburbia does Pugh try sentimentally to be the voice of the average Cockney. In *The Cockney at Home* he is the humorous critic. Elsewhere he is the fugitive from crudity and the savage critic of the herd.

A Saturday night street market opens *The Man of Straw;* its rows of naphtha lamps throw a glare upon barrows of every variety of portable thing; competition sounds its babel of roars and shouts. There are the music halls to which Gideon Bolsover and Mims go, and to which Mark Gillies takes Eve.[49] Clearer are the halls frequented by Holy Jo and Maddie Marmory, and by John Coldershaw.[50] But nowhere in his fiction does Pugh advance the sympathetic interpretation that these necessities of the Londoner's entertainment deserve. Snobbishness dulls pictures that should have something of the lift that the Variety imparts to the common folk. Pugh's inability to taste for himself the joys of average life shows starkly in his description in *The Man of Straw* of the program at the Momus theatre. The orchestra plays out of time and tune, the songs are disgusting, in the bar is a noisy crowd of puffy-faced men and blousy women, and as for the audience: "'The Gorgonzola Cheese' was mouthed by the wizened youth (a singer), and sung by the audience. Drunken boyhood, sodden manhood, anaemic womanhood, foul age, howled and shrieked it from the gallery; men in greasy evening dress and debauched women hummed it in the stalls; a crowd of mad youths rioted through the carpet lanes between the seats, and cried it forth to an accompaniment of wild dancing, waiters pursuing them with timid expostulation."[51] Was of such really the London of 1900?

Perhaps the same music hall is described in *Mother-Sister;* at any rate, that too is called the Momus. And the same depression that clouds the performance in the earlier book embitters Pugh's observation of this other Momus. Instead of being pictured focussing upon the stage expressions of a surrender to romance, countenances of those watching "might have been the faces of lost souls, doomed to dwell forever in a region of eternal gloom, under favor of looking down upon the revels of the blest." Maddie is made voluble with her ecstasy, and Holy Jo's foot keeps time to tunes that celebrate the Britisher's loyalty to whiskey and the

rough and tumble life.[52] Acrobats, vocalists, knockabout comedians, jugglers, a strong man, mostly bore Eve and Mark Gillies, while rousing an uproar of delight from the common folk. Pugh himself feels nothing of the joy that he describes, and he lets you think that the proceedings are downright vulgar. Somewhere in *The City of the World* he credits the Cockney male with sensibility to respond with tears to pathos on the stage, but he insists that there is no carry-over of joy or sentiment from theatrical artifice into life. It is as if Pugh despised the audiences for their lack of sympathy with his literary art, and yet were jealous of the performers who, lacking his fine sensitiveness and craft for appealing to the cultured, could yet so intuitively and effortlessly give expression to the ideals and errors of the common herd.

The public house, another of England's institutions, is also for the most part rendered without sympathy. In the East end pub to which the quack medicine vendor and former Shakespearian actor brings all his earned and borrowed pence, men and hags quarrel noisily and shout baiting sallies at laughing-stocks.[53] The Holystone in Kentish Town is sketched on an evening when it is crowded with girls and crones and men; most of them are yelling or breaking into tuneless concerted songs. Maddie calls there for her sister Bridget, who has drunk too much.[54] In *The Cockney at Home* a more kindly temper invests Pugh's drawing of public house scenes. There are no quarrels and no drunkenness. The humorous tone of the book is sustained in scenes of timid folk whom drink turns into boasters and who inspire chaffering wit among the harder headed.

A Cockney landlord, Jim Scratch, brings geniality to that Sussex inn of *The Purple Head:* stirring talk and pointed repartee overflow in its hearth-rosed tap-room. In still another romance, *The World is My Oyster,* the public-house scenes, perhaps with some effort, are drawn to impress pleasingly: the Man in the Moon, situated in Somers Town, seems never to know customers who drink too much and who must be led out before closing time. The billiard room does not reverberate with oaths of disgust or assertions and denials repeated with steadily rising intonations until the challenge to battle is reached. Is the influence of Adrian

Pybus to be given the credit for such orderliness, or is it simply the code of romance forbidding unpleasant truth?

The only sketch of a pub that is drawn with neither malice nor deliberate humor is that of The Prince of Denmark, in *Empty Vessels,* the scene of Roost's encounter with Beryl and Sidney. "There the clerk or respectable artisan takes his sweetheart for a stirrup-cup of port, there married couples, whose social status may range from that of a meek roundsman to that of a chartered accountant, are in the habit of resorting regularly as other married couples resort to one another's front parlors, for recreation and refreshment. There is seldom any least disturbance of the almost cloistral air of calm repose which pervades those gilded haunts of vice, as they have been called; there is always a plenitude of goodfellowship and innocent laughter."[55]

The coffee-shops are rarely mentioned, and leave no such lasting impression as do those Neil Lyons writes about.

The Thames, the aorta of London that has been so often described and allegorized, is not forgotten by Pugh, but it is not often seen nor is it freshly drawn. Rather it is vaguely resketched from memories of Dickens.

There is no mention of the river in *A Street in Suburbia:* it could not have meant a very great deal to Pugh, or it would have forced its way into this earliest book, even if only in the form of a simile. In *The Man of Straw* Mrs. Coldershaw is ferried over to Staines during a heavy rain on an errand of love for her son. And after John has murdered Alice Shallers he walks in a daze to the westward, and stops on Hammersmith Bridge to look down without seeing the barges, tugs, and steamers that are plying on the brown river.[56] Into the story of that Kentish Town outcast aptly named "Moll" is introduced a harridan who for years has found shelter underneath one or other of the bridges, and who knows whereof she speaks. She says of the Thames: " 'It's a very harmless old river, and it sings better lullabies than any mother'."[57] That is Pugh's rendering of a theme Dickens knew so well how to utter. In *The Enchantress* there is an insignificant glimpse of the river just south of Hungerford bridge after dark: its surface is said to be placid; anchored crafts swing in the tides; barge fires burn red.[58] When in *Punch and Judy* Pugh has occa-

sion to describe the same spot he repeats verbatim the description he had written in the earlier book. Why? Was it because of his unfamiliarity, or his indifference; or was it perhaps because he remembered all that Dickens had said about the Thames and could not trust himself to say of himself what had been said by the master. Pugh's intensely subjective nature might easily have been discouraged from creation, instead of being inspired, by the example.

The evidence seems strongly to suggest, though it may seem harsh to conclude, that Pugh, despite his dependence upon the City for inspiration and material, and in spite of the spell it cast over him, yet seems never to have felt toward it such a frank love as would have made it all seem picturesque, if not beautiful, nor to have been able even to see it clearly for its own sake. Though his craving for London amounted to a passion, there were few places about London town that gave Pugh a real joy to see and to review in emotional prose: the best loved were the playfields of his childhood, Hampstead Heath and the distances to the north and northwest of the Heath.

APPENDIX

Bibliography and Notes on the Chapters

Bibliography of Works of Edwin Pugh (1874-1930)

Novels

The Man of Straw, Heinemann, 1896. Reprinted 1897
Tony Drum, a Cockney Boy, Heinemann, 1898. Reprinted 1913
Mother-Sister, Hurst, 1900
The Stumbling Block, Heinemann, 1903
The Fruit of the Vine, Long, 1904
The Spoilers, Newnes, 1905. Reprinted 1913, 1920
The Shuttlecock, Hurst and Blackett, 1907
The Enchantress, Milne, 1908
The Broken Honeymoon, Milne, 1908. Reprinted 1910
Peter Vandy, C. H. White, 1909
Punch and Judy, Chapman and Hall, 1913
Harry the Cockney, Chapman and Hall, 1913
The Quick and the Dead, Chapman and Hall, 1914
The Eyes of a Child, Chapman and Hall, 1917
(Reprinted 1923, by Cecil Palmer)
The Secret Years, Cecil Palmer, 1923
Empty Vessels, Ward Lock, 1926. Reprinted 1927, 1930

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The Cockney at Home, Chapman and Hall, 1914

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[2] Bk 9, ch 1; Bk 13, ch 1; Bk 14, ch 1
[3] Enchantress, Pt 2, ch 10
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[4] Secret Years, ch 9
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Peter Vandy, ch 9
[5] S. Y., ch 9, sec 3
[6] Quick and the Dead, Pt 4, ch 19
[7] S. Y., ch 9, sec 3
[8] Fruit of the Vine, ch 4
[9] Empty Vessels, ch 3, sec 3
P. J., ch 5, sec 3
[10] World is My Oyster, ch 17
[11] P. V., ch 12
[12] S. A., "Malice Aforethought"
[13] Harry the Cockney, p. 22
[14] Cockney at Home, "Humble Pie"
[15] Eyes of a Child, ch 2, sec 3
[16] King Circumstance, title page
[17] S. Y., ch 9
[18] E. V., ch 5, sec 3
[19] Book of Laughter, ch 5, sec 3
[20] E., Pt 1, ch 6
[21] E. V., ch 7, sec 4
[22] B. H., ch 13
[23] B. H., ch 9
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[24] F. V., ch 24
[25] Shuttlecock, ch 10
[26] Purple Head, ch 27
[27] E. V., ch 2, sec 6
[28] Q. D., Pt 1, ch 16
[29] P. J., ch 17, sec 1
[30] Stumbling Block ch 35
S. A., "Heroines and Heroes"
[31] H. C., p. 219
[32] idem
[33] B. L., ch 3, sec 1
[34] P. J., ch 11, sec 1
[35] E. C., ch 1, sec 2
[36] W. O., Pt 1, ch 5
[37] F. V., ch 14
[38] Q. D., Pt 2, ch 4
[39] H. C.
[40] S. Y., ch 8, sec 8
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[41] E. C., ch 6, sec 6
[42] Sh., ch 18

[43] idem
[44] B. H., ch 3
[45] P. J., ch 11, sec 2
[46] S. B., ch 21
[47] B. H., ch 7
[48] idem
[49] Q. D., Pt 1, ch 16
[50] P. J., ch 6, sec 1
[51] S. B., ch 20
[52] Q. D., Pt 2, ch 16
[53] Street in Suburbia, ch 2; ch 3
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[54] E. V., ch 2, sec 4
[55] B. L., ch 2, sec 3
[56] Sh., ch 21
[57] idem
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Sh., ch 21
[59] E., Pt 2, ch 5
[60] Q. D., Pt 4, ch 21
[61] E. V., ch 6, sec 1
[62] S. A., "Heroines and Heroes"
B. L., ch 2, sec 1
[63] idem
[64] Q. D., Pt 2, ch 20
[65] P. V., ch 7
[66] idem
[67] The Man of Straw, ch 21
[68] Q. D., Pt 3, ch 3
[69] idem
[70] M. S., ch 26
E. V., ch 5, sec 2
[71] Q. D., Pt 4, ch 1
[72] B. L., ch 6, sec 3
[73] idem
[74] S. B., ch 32
[75] B. L., ch 4, sec 1
[76] S. Y., ch 8, sec 8
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[78] E. C., ch 2, sec 4
[79] S. A., "The Silence of Women"
[80] Q. D., Pt 2, ch 5
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[82] S. B., ch 8
[83] B. H., ch 16
[84] Q. D., Pt 4, ch 21
[85] B. H., ch 16
[86] S. Y., ch 9, sec 1
[87] B. H., ch 16
[88] B. L., ch 2, sec 3
[89] E., Pt 1, ch 8
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[91] K. C., "A Singer of Dreams"
[92] B. H., ch 9
[93] P. J., ch 17, sec 2
[94] S. B., ch 23

[95] P. J., ch 11, sec 2
[96] B. L., ch 6, sec 3
[97] P. J., ch 16, sec 3
[98] E. V., ch 5, sec 4
[99] P. J., ch 17, sec 1
[100] E. V., ch 2, sec 5
[101] P. V., ch 7
[102] P. J., ch 9, sec 4
[103] B. L., ch 6, sec 3
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[104] B. H., ch 16
P. J., ch 17, sec 1
E. V., ch 3, sec 2
[105] idem
[106] B. L., ch 2, sec 1
[107] S. A., "Perils of the Honeymoon"
B. H., ch 11
[108] E. V., ch 3, sec 3
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[110] P. J., ch 15, sec 4
[111] B. H., ch 13
[112] P. J., ch 11, sec 2
[113] Q. D., Pt 2, ch 5
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[115] P. J., ch 11, sec 2
[116] E. C., ch 4, sec 3
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[118] S. Y., ch 9, sec 2
[119] E. C., ch 4, sec 5
S. Y., ch 1, sec 5
[120] K. C., "Appearances"
[121] P. J., ch 11, sec 4
[122] B. L., ch 10, sec 2
[123] H. C., p. 97
[124] S. Y., ch 9, sec 3
[125] P. J., ch 5, sec 1
[126] E., Pt 2, ch 5
[127] The Spoilers, ch 11
[128] P. J., ch 5, sec 1
[129] E. V., ch 3, sec 3
[130] S. Y., ch 3, sec 3
[131] E. C., ch 2, sec 4
[132] S. Y., ch 9, sec 3
[133] S. A., "Dickens"
[134] E. C., ch 3, sec 2
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[1] B. L., ch 4, sec 1
[2] ibid, ch 6, sec 5
[3] ibid, ch 1, sec 3
[4] F. V., ch 16
[5] P. V., ch 7
[6] C. W., ch 1, sec 3
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[12] Sh., ch 4
[13] E. V., ch 3, sec 5
[14] E., ch 4
[15] C. W., ch 5, sec 8
[16] P. J., ch 4, sec 2
[17] K. C., "A Singer of Dreams"
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C. W., ch 12, sec 1
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